

NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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BY

W. J. BATCHELDER

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BY
W. J. BATCHELDER

PART I.
FOR JUNIORS

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PREFACE.

THIS is an endeavour to translate the chapter on the Teaching of English in the Board of Education's 'Suggestions to Teachers' into a practical hand-book. It differs from the older text-books on Teaching because it stimulates the teacher to practise on his own account, rather than to follow prescribed courses. At the same time the author has endeavoured to help the teacher by such a copious number of examples, stories, and lists of suitable writings and authors that it will be some time before the resources of the book are exhausted.

The number of examples and suggestive hints included will make the book particularly useful to young teachers, who have not had time to furnish themselves with a complement of simple and suitable stories, and is one of the best features of the book. At the same time, while it provides teachers with a thoroughly sound and practical basis for their lessons, it leaves them free to exercise their own ability in interesting and instructing their classes.

Older teachers will be grateful for being reminded of such elementary truths as that the child discards the means whereby he learns to read to devote his attention to the reading-matter, and that children desire no moral in their fairy-tales ; and Class Teachers will derive a very considerable amount of help from the practical hints for correcting written exercises (an accumulating difficulty in schools), on how to arrange large classes for reading in groups, on the use of reference books, on changes in routine, and on devices which should contribute to make the English-teaching of absorbing interest.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ENGLISH-TEACHING.

THE subject of English-teaching in Elementary Schools is a very wide one ; and just because its possibilities as an educational factor are enormous, the difficulties the teacher encounters in the course of the work are proportionately great. Instruction in English and the subjects connected with it represents a good half of the formal education of the child within the walls of the school. It includes that portion of the scheme of education which is concerned mainly with the cultivation of the intellect and the emotions, and which plays a great part in the development of the moral principle. Valuable lessons in thoughtfulness, perseverance, carefulness, and control, are learned from the pursuit of the various practical subjects ; but much of the ethical teaching of the school must always centre about the instruction in the mother-tongue. There are no bounds to the study of English in schools, except those which the teacher sets himself in the interests of effectiveness ; and it permeates every subject

and lesson of the school curriculum. In addition to direct teaching in English, almost every lesson in History, Geography, Nature-Study, and even Arithmetic, is an incidental exercise in the mother-tongue ; and it is a clear duty to see that the child masters his native language as thoroughly as possible. The responsibility of the primary schools in this matter is the greater, because, amongst the great majority of the children who attend them, the influence of the home and environment is opposed to that of the class-room.

In recent years a great extension of ' practical ' methods of education has been introduced. The various forms of handwork included have for their object the development of the mental and physical faculties, and, in a less degree, of the character, through the medium of sense-training, and as the result of constant stimulation of the brain. That these methods of practical instruction, psychologically and physiologically considered, are of the utmost formative value, is undoubted. At the same time, if they are practised to the exclusion of the purely intellectual part of a system of education, the education must result in being incomplete and, so to speak, lop-sided. The Board of Education have shown their wisdom in this regard, by emphasising the importance of the intellectual training of the scholars side by side with physical training. The earlier ' Suggestions ' on the Teaching of English, which the Board issued, were frankly tentative in form and scope ; and as a corollary of these the later

suggestions have been issued. Careful enquiry on the part of the Board, and the welcome they have given to the criticisms and practical proposals of teachers, who understand not only what is desirable but what is practicable in the conditions under which they work, have had their effect upon the form of the more recently published 'Suggestions,' which has made them perhaps the most valuable and precise guide to teachers ever issued.

In the past twenty years we have seen experimental teaching devices for details of work regarded, for a time at least, as general methods of instruction. For example, there has been a great insistence upon the peculiar value of word-building, the look-and-say method of reading, various other methods of learning to read, the total abolition of formal grammar and of direct spelling instruction, etc. These points in the teaching of English have now been assessed at their true value—as points of detail—and the general tendency of the Suggestions now is that teachers should instruct intelligently upon those times which they find most effective. The truth is, that whilst every teacher should evolve his own methods, and use the utmost discrimination in deciding upon their merits, the chief factors to be considered are the needs and the mental condition of the particular children he teaches, and how far the study of the mother-tongue—a prime necessity of to-day—may be made to serve the aims of mental, moral, and ethical development. This consideration does not minimise the value of the wealth of

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suggestions for methods, etc., which has been placed before the teacher. His task is to select the best for his own personal use.

In this book, which follows closely the lines and arrangement of the later 'Suggestions,' an effort has been made to set forth as many practical details and examples in method as may render it specially useful to those for whom it is intended, that is, student-teachers in their year at the elementary school, students in training, and those teachers who have had a limited experience in the study and teaching of English. In spite of the fact that to the layman much of this little manual may appear trivial and even unnecessary, it is earnestly hoped that the minor points discussed herein, and the various devices suggested for awakening and sustaining interest may prove of practical value to the class-teacher. Even now, it is not generally realised that class-teaching is a peculiar art. The simultaneous instruction of from forty to sixty children demands great skill, thoughtfulness, and the use of special devices; and though individual teaching is more possible than was formerly held to be the case, the fact remains that there must always be an unavoidable distinction between methods that may be successfully employed in a nursery of half a dozen children and in ordinary school-room practice. If there be educational theorists who demur to this statement, let them attempt to apply the methods they have found effective in their own family circle upon a class of children drawn from fifty poor homes,

and formally instructed for a brief five hours out of the twenty-four.

A careful effort has been made in these pages to assist class-teachers to realise the purpose, sequence, and possibilities of the successive stages in the teaching of English in Elementary Schools ; and readers are advised to make themselves acquainted with the matter contained in both Parts I. and II. (whether they be juniors' teachers or not) in order that they may arrive at a definite conception of the main purpose of the entire scheme of English-teaching. The system of preparing teachers at the present time results in a shorter practical experience in class-teaching before qualification than formerly ; their professional experiments are made when they have passed the most formative phase of life, and when adaptability is less easy ; hence there is every reason why they should grasp the principles underlying class-methods when they begin to practise. It should be understood that the practical hints given are merely suggestive, and not set forth with any particular detailed scheme in view. Teachers will adapt them to suit the conditions under which they work, and will only use those methods and expedients which experience shows are of assistance to them personally. No claim for originality of treatment is made, and the suggestions included in this book have been practically tested.

In the succeeding chapters the connection between the instruction of infants, juniors, and seniors is discussed ; and the scope of the English lessons

has been traced with reference to the expanding powers of the children. A short consideration of dramatic exercises with suggestions for their treatment has also been included. With regard to what the infants' classes can master by way of preparation for the work of the junior section, we have indicated the maximum of progress in reading, etc., and this may be somewhat misleading. Schemes of work in infants' departments are necessarily diverse. It has been assumed that reading is *the* instructional subject of the infants' school; and consequently there may be indicated a greater degree of progress than many teachers would attempt. In many poor districts, where the chief aim of the infants' school is to bring an unfamiliar element of play into the lives of the little ones, and where it is desirable to make school especially attractive by reason of an antagonistic environment, rather than to hasten the time of more formal instruction, the progress in reading, etc., will not nearly approach that indicated. We assume that in most infants' schools the English scheme centres round the lessons on nature-observation, and that the scheme for the lower standard of the junior section is sufficiently elastic to render possible a continuity of method. The general work of infants' schools is commonly hazy in outline, chiefly because the function of these schools is not precisely defined. The progress in reading assumed in this book, however, is not beyond the capacity of average children, for we have known it to be exceeded in rural districts, where the children have not been

pushed beyond their powers, and where number-work has been subordinated to the more important subject of English. A quotation from the Board of Education pamphlet on the Montessori System is especially valuable in this connection: "At any rate, whatever else Dottoressa Montessori has done, she has fully proved that reading and writing can be taught to quite young children—to 'babies' in fact—without over-taxing their brains, and without their realising that they are doing anything but playing at interesting games."

The intention of the inclusion of actual teaching-results is to assist teachers of limited practice, who may read this book, to estimate the results that it is possible to secure; and the consideration of these results obviates the need for lengthy discussion. Young teachers are frequently discouraged by results which really are quite satisfactory, but which their scanty experience prohibits them from assessing at their right value. The same reason may lead other teachers to be content with results which are inadequate, though this is not always the case, because the determining factors of the mental state, heredity, and environment of the children must be considered. This power of assessing results is most important. Student-teachers in their time at school receive training in general methods only, and, because they do not continue to instruct a class for a period of any length, they have no adequate means of testing their efficiency by the results obtained. Opportunity for this really comes for

the first time when they assume responsibility for a class after their novitiate. It will be seen from this how far definite illustrations of children's powers at the various stages may be helpful.

Some attempt has been made at a comprehensive view of the gradual development of the power to speak, to write, and to read. Speaking, writing, and reading are necessities in a highly-civilised community ; but the study of English in schools should go beyond the purely utilitarian standpoint. Reading should come to be a source of pleasure and culture as well as profit ; and the school furnishes an introduction to a new and beautiful world, the realm of literature, of which Wordsworth wrote :

*" Books we know
Are a substantial world, both pure and good ;
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow."*

If the study of English during the few short years of school life is to reach a standard that will render this ideal attainable, the scheme of instruction in the mother-tongue must be ambitious from the first. However, the ambition of the teacher must be tempered with discretion and sound judgment. It is, at the same time, probably better to err by attempting too much rather than too little, for difficulties do not so readily disgust children and destroy interest, as when their daily tasks appear to them easy or trivial. Further, the importance of the study of the mother-tongue should be estimated with due regard to the aims of the elementary school

—the formation of character, good habits of thought, accurate judgment, and disciplined intelligence. For nothing can conduce so much to clear thinking and lofty ideals as a clear knowledge of the mother-tongue and a sound grasp of its literature.

CHAPTER II.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CONVERSATION.

The Process of Self-Education in the Child.

In order to be able to select the best and most natural methods of instructing the child in its mother-tongue, the teacher will do well to consider the development of the young mind during the years which precede any attempts at formal training.

It is probable that the child assimilates a greater variety of ideas in the first four years of its life than at any other period. All its waking hours are devoted to a course of instinctive education from external things. From the moment when the first signs of dawning intelligence in its eyes replace the uncomprehending stare of the earlier stage, the infant consciousness is a succession of spontaneous mental activities, interrupted only during the hours of sleep. This process of self-education has its source in the natural unfolding of the senses. At first the tiny fingers close tightly upon the palms of the hands ; then the sense of touch and movement awakes, and the baby learns to clutch at objects within reach ; the eyes observe brightly-coloured things that come

within their range ; memory begins with the recognition of familiar faces ; hearing assists the other senses by registering sounds ; and the beginning of speech is heralded by involuntary chuckles and crowing noises, which the baby presently recognises with pleasure may be repeated by its own efforts. The process of self-education proceeds until at length articulate speech is produced, as the result of the exercise of *observation and memory*, and daily practice in *sound-making*.

The rapid progress of the child at this stage is chiefly due to two circumstances. Firstly, its experiences and ideas are limited to its immediate surroundings, and its early impressions, besides being vivid, are received a few at a time. Secondly, its mental growth is unfettered, and its acquirements are regulated by its powers at the moment. Consequently, its mental growth, like its bodily growth, is the result of free development. When school age is reached, it is reasonable to suppose that the best method of education will follow the same plan, so far as the conditions of the school allow. That is to say, all impressions will be kept distinct and undistracted, the free and natural development of the child will be interfered with as little as possible, and nothing will be attempted that is beyond the child's powers.

The Vocabulary of the Child.

The number of words at the command of the very young or the untaught child is necessarily very small.

At the same time it is remarkable how intelligible the child manages to be, and how it makes shift to express a wide range of ideas by means of its limited vocabulary. A few examples will best illustrate this point. A little child, who was learning his letters at his mother's knee, remarked, when he found himself unable to recall the name of a letter he had just previously named correctly: "I can't keep it. I've lost it!" adding, "I don't keep my *remember*, do I?" . . . To the infant mind 'Christmas,' as an adjective, conveys no meaning, whilst a piece of holly which may be stuck in the top of the pudding is a tangible thing. Hence we find a little child speaking of a 'Christmas-pudding' as a 'holly-pudding,' which is, to him, the more descriptive expression. . . . Another child recognised a music-book by the stave-ruling on its pages, and declared: "It's a *singing-book*, 'cos there's *singing* in it."

Sometimes the child's point of view leads him to express himself in a way that is difficult to understand. Even the commonest objects are fresh to children, and strike their minds very differently from the way they appeal to adults. A bright little girl of three astonished her mother by announcing: "I want to wheel my shoes about! I want to wheel my shoes about—on those things in the collar-shop." The mother failed to grasp her meaning until she recollected that in a shop (into which the child had been taken to buy a collar for her pet dog), several pairs of roller-skates had been hanging near the counter. The little girl had recognised these as the

things upon which she had seen children "wheeling their shoes about," and had consequently expressed her point of view thus to her mother.

Such incidents of speech as we have noted are by no means unimportant to the teacher. The student of children cannot hope to teach efficiently if she affect a superiority to the work of instructing the babies. Little children are often wiser than their elders, particularly in the methods they unconsciously employ for self-education and self-expression. Besides, the primary aim of the infants' classes should be to retain the methods of the child in its early attempts at self-expression, and not to substitute formal teaching methods for them. The first efforts of the school will be directed towards stimulating facility and accuracy of expression *along the lines to which the child has instinctively accustomed itself*, that is, by the exercise of observation and memory, accompanied by regular practice in speaking. Thus, almost every 'lesson' with the younger infants will naturally be also a language-lesson conducted as freely as the conditions of the school allow.

Early Training of the Senses.

A word may be said here upon the method of self-education as formulated by Madame Montessori. The system, though undoubtedly reasonable and correct under the conditions found in the nursery, must remain to a great extent impracticable in our schools—at least, until the organisation of the infants' classes is radically altered. There is no reason,

however, why a liberal correlation of the method with the present kindergarten lessons should not be employed by thoughtful teachers with the most valuable results. Indeed, this is already the case in many schools where the *new* method, as such, is not formally insisted upon, though the large classes in vogue render it impracticable to introduce entirely what is, after all, an essentially nursery method.

Sense-training may be easily practised with large classes, even though the children are not allowed to employ themselves as the fancy of the moment dictates. Very properly, too, the sense of touch is the first to which appeal is made usually. Smooth and rough slips of paper may be compared by feeling, and commented upon by the children in such a manner as to cause them to employ the words describing the qualities of smoothness and roughness. A dozen simple ways of comparing light with heavy objects, large with small, and long with short, will occur to the teacher. By their means the various words denoting the qualities may be *learned* by the children instead of being formally taught. Notions of colour and form are easily acquired in the various 'gift' lessons; and the teacher need only take care that the children learn instead of being consciously instructed. Thus, the initial processes of self-education, *i.e.* observation, memory, and language-learning, may be continued when the child attends school for the first time.

In connection with the free-lessons arranged for the first year in the infants' department, it is well

to remember that the normal child plays the game of 'pretending' earliest, and that story-telling is a slightly later development. The youngest child who has mastered speech likes nothing better than " 'tending," and its pretences are based upon ideas gathered from the incidents and objects of its daily life. A wooden box, in which the child can kneel whilst it drags itself across the floor, is a 'boat'; most children find pleasure in pretending to keep shop; those who play much alone are frequently found experimenting with the shadows of themselves or their playthings upon the wall. Such pastimes furnish hints for the direction of the earlier play-lessons, besides indicating why poems like Robert Louis Stevenson's "My Bed is a Boat" are delightful to even the tiniest children.

"How do pigs (or horses, or cows, or rabbits, etc.) make their noise?" is the common enquiry of many a small child, and when he has received the desired information, he will painstakingly act a pig, or a horse, until he wearies of the game. Similar games, indulged in by the children, singly or in groups, in the babies' room, are as educational as many of the more formal games. They give opportunity for self-expression, and provoke valuable attempts at simple conversation.

Conversation Lessons for Young Children.

Amongst other difficulties that the teacher meets in the course of conversation lessons is the shyness exhibited by very young children. Certain children

who chatter volubly enough with their playmates out of doors become dumb in the school-room. This shyness is caused by a natural self-consciousness in the presence of so many other children ; and even at this stage the less forward ones are sensible of their inferior powers. The feeling is further strengthened by a partial realisation of their difficulty in expressing themselves plainly. Shyness can largely be overcome by awakening the child's interest to such a degree that self-consciousness is forgotten ; and by appealing to the natural fondness of the child for all forms of active movement.

Even the most informal conversations call for some definite subject of discussion. This may be found in the familiar things of the school-room, the home, or the street—in a word, by those objects which the dullest child can observe and form ideas upon. A child's pet, *e.g.* a dog, a cat, a bird, or a gold-fish in a bowl, may easily form the central subject of a conversation lesson. Living objects, because they move, usually make the strongest appeal ; but the contents of a doll's house, the child's play-box, or a particular toy, such as a top, are almost as useful. Good bold pictures, simple in colour and execution, are valuable when their subjects are such as will awaken interest in young minds. And if the teacher, though she be the poorest draughtsman, illustrates a simple story in coloured chalks on brown paper, the exercise will suggest a dozen different points of discussion when the children try to reconstruct the anecdote from the drawing. Another

plan is for the teacher to sketch a scene without explaining its meaning, and afterwards to ask her class a series of questions intended to elicit some simple story. The method may be varied by encouraging each child to write a story or incident in the most primitive of all language, that is, pictorially, by means of pastels. When the pictures are completed, a few children should be called upon to explain their attempts to the rest. The result is the simple statement of what the child has endeavoured to represent.

As a rule, whenever conversation of the kind indicated is elicited, the teacher will find it desirable to ask a few questions in order to assist the child in its explanation. It is, however, not desirable to stop to correct every mistake the child should make in expressing itself. For the errors that arise are chiefly due to the immense difficulty found by the child in explaining the idea he has depicted. To correct a slip is often to cover the child with confusion, and to destroy the germ of an idea. So long as a sentence clearly conveys its meaning, the form it takes is of secondary importance. Sometimes it will happen that a small child finds it impossible to say more than a very few words. When this is the case, it is best to commend it for the attempt, and to call upon another to add something to what has already been said. By this means mutual suggestions will be encouraged, and these are far more helpful than any the teacher could give. Above all, it should be borne in mind, that ridicule of any sort

is fatal to self-expression and self-realisation ; and the lesson should be changed immediately the children show signs of weariness or begin to lose interest.

Selection of Suitable Pictures and Stories.

The pictures and story-books used as the basis of conversation-lessons in infant-teaching call for the most careful selection. Pictures for this purpose should be clearly drawn, coloured simply, and with no elaborate detail. Scenes in the style familiar in Dutch subjects—of the poster type, with big colour spaces and bold outlines—illustrating children at play, animals, or common occupations, such as those of the carrier, postman, milkman, etc., are very suitable. Floral pictures, however decorative they may be, and ‘heads’ of children, are of little practical use ; and the same may be said of many types of landscape, except when they contain foreground objects boldly treated and of the kind that will interest children.

It is quite easy nowadays to obtain suitable illustrations of nursery rhymes and children’s stories, and to store them in a portfolio for use in conversation lessons. Series of pictures illustrating the months, seasons, etc., can be kept in button-backed frames, and periodically changed. Interest is hard to arouse in a picture which may be looked at at any time on the class-room wall, and such interest is seldom worth the effort required to awaken it. For this reason, whenever a picture provides the topic

of conversation, it is preferable to select one with which the class is unfamiliar. Many children's magazines, and story-books intended for nursery use, have the simple letterpress illustrated with brightly-coloured pictures that are sufficiently bold in treatment to be seen from the front of the class. The children readily recognise the scenes and objects of the story, and are delighted to tell of what they see.

The language of the teacher of the babies, and indeed of the infants' school generally, needs to be very simple. It is not necessary, however, that the teacher should confine herself entirely to the words used by the children. Children understand far more words than they habitually employ. What is needed is graphic language, which is at the same time simple and terse. Simple sentences rather than simple words will be employed by the teacher, and it is undesirable to explain every word which may possibly be new to the children. If the teacher takes care to use the words in their proper sense, the children will gather their meaning from the context—precisely as older folks do.

The subject of conversation for children who have been at school longer than one or two years will be considered later in the chapter on oral composition. With the youngest children it is better not to attempt anything very formal. Still, teachers may do useful work with short jingles and nursery rhymes. Babies are enormously fond of jingles, and even when they can find nothing to say about them, the rhymes provide exercises in memory and the sounds of speech.

From the first the child should be accustomed to hear its own voice, and to say the rhymes by itself. A jingle like 'Baa, baa, Black Sheep,' is remembered better and enjoyed more when acted and spoken by a few selected children whilst the remainder sit round, than when it is droned in chorus. "Ten little Nigger Boys" makes a very good play for children; and the 'pretending' method may be usefully employed with other exercises in speech and memory, such as, 'Miss Muffet,' 'A little Cock-Sparrow,' 'The Merry Mice,' 'The North Wind,' etc. The children may also discuss the words of their simple songs; whilst fairy-tales will generally be acted at this stage without the teacher attempting to have them formally narrated by the scholars.

In those infants' schools where the schemes are seasonal and based upon nature-study, the smallest children will talk to their teacher about the weather, the seasons, and flowers and fruits; and there will be simple talks about daily events, in addition to chats on personal habits and conduct, or about objects found in the school and out of it. Conversation will also centre about the games, and the objects mentioned in recitation, songs, and occupations, or used in drawing lessons.

The teacher will give every child opportunity for individual speech, though the methods adopted to secure this may require modification as progress is made. Within the first two years of school life a normal child should be capable of free speech with other children or with the teacher. Simple guessing-

games, free games invented by the children themselves, ring-games, with or without music, and story-acting, all provide opportunity for the child to speak alone without being shy. Such daily practice in speaking will quickly result in the ability to express an idea fully and at some length. Stories from Grimm, Andersen, Longfellow ("Tales of a Wayside Inn,"), etc., told by the teacher in simple language, will be still fresh, and better grasped, when dealt with more fully later on. Meanwhile they will serve the purpose of awakening interest, teaching the use and meaning of words, and preparing the way for accurate expression of thought and feeling.

In all lessons, however, the teacher will do well to remember that those lessons are the most valuable in which the bodies and limbs, as well as the minds and tongues, of the children are continually exercised; and that the less she herself has occasion to supplement, instruct, or explain, the better.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSATION LESSONS FOR INFANTS.

THIS section on speech-training is mainly intended to indicate suitable methods of handling the subject ; and some attempt has been made to suggest the mental attitude of the child. The lessons selected may serve to indicate various ways in which the different aspects of the scheme of the infants' classes—we purposely call them 'aspects' rather than 'subjects'—can be linked with one another.

Although the outlined lessons are drawn up in accordance with Professor Rein's classification as used in Herbartian schools on the continent, they are not intended to be dealt with in a single period of instruction. The five points of the Herbartian method are merely employed to ensure a logical sequence of treatment ; and the various parts of a lesson may be distributed over a whole week in order to permit of use with the time-table, and to obviate the weariness that would inevitably follow if the whole lesson were dealt with in one session.

Nursery Rhymes as a Basis for Conversation.

The original notion of the numerous nursery rhymes which have survived from past ages was simply to amuse young children. This accounts for the whimsical manner of these ancient jingles ; and is why most of them contain no particular meaning, and no moral. If by any chance they do contain any instruction, it is purely by chance. Still, generations of little people have been delighted and entertained by the old jingles, and, incidentally, have had their vocabularies enlarged and their memories exercised in the pleasant process.

We have selected for full treatment the rhyme of 'Jack and Jill.' Other nursery favourites worthy of special attention are : 'Ding-dong Bell,' 'Three Blind Mice,' 'Mary, Mary, quite contrary,' 'Little Polly Flinders,' 'Little Miss Muffet,' 'Little Jack Horner,' 'Pussy-cat, Pussy-cat,' 'Hey, Diddle-diddle,' and 'The Man in the Moon.' Some of these, of course, are modern, but the others are original folk-rhymes. We were tempted to select the last-mentioned one as an example of how even a very young child may perceive and appreciate a paradox without its being specially pointed out. For, when a little fellow heard this particular jingle for the first time, he remained thoughtful for a full minute, considering the matter with that grave attention little children will show. At length he chuckled aloud, and announced : "Oh, fancy—

'burnt his mouf !' . . . He couldn't have burnt his mouf if it was *cold*—he was only 'tending !'

Conversation Lesson on 'Jack and Jill.'

Requirements. A boy and two girls to act the parts : a pail, rug, plate, and piece of brown paper.

Part I. (Preparation and Presentation).

(a) The teacher begins by explaining that the boy is Jack, and the first girl is Jill. Some of the children who already know the jingle will immediately inform the teacher of the fact. Teacher asks for suggestions for the dress of the children. Jill puts on a bonnet and pinafore, and Jack a soft hat. They take up the pail between them. Where are they going ? . . . What are they going for ? . . . The two children pretend to clamber up the hill, and pause in the centre of the ring of children. One of the children who knows the rhyme is asked to say it, to this point :

*" Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water."*

Teacher enquires of the class what the two must do next, and the children fall down as directed, Jack first and Jill second. The pail is dropped, and Jack rubs his head. Teacher, with an air of surprise, asks what has happened. Various children are anxious to enlighten her, and explain that Jack has fallen down, Jill has tumbled down too, and the pail is on the ground. Children are allowed to

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speculate as to whether the accident occurred before or after the pail was filled. If the latter, what happened to the water ?

Members of the class repeat separately the incident to this point :

*“ Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down, and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.”*

(b) Jack gets to his feet, holding his head, and runs home (across the ring of children). Jill follows at a little distance.

Child who knows the jingle announces :

*“ Up Jack got, and home did trot,
As fast as he could caper.”*

Teacher asks who met Jack at the door ? Jack's mother. Second little girl, representing the mother at the door, advances to meet Jack. He is holding his head and crying. Jill takes one arm, and his mother the other. Children are invited to tell what happened next. Jack is thereupon laid down on the rug, and a piece of brown paper is put on the sore place, after being dipped in imaginary vinegar in the plate. Various children repeat the second verse in turn, prompted where necessary *by the others* :

*“ Up Jack got, and home did trot,
As fast as he could caper.
They put him to bed, and mended his head
With vinegar and brown paper.”*

Part II. (Association).

The incidents are re-enacted by other children who volunteer for the parts ; and the rhyme is repeated by others. *Note* : This point will probably be the best at which to change the lesson.

Part III. (Formulation).

Children are asked to describe the acting of ' Jack and Jill.' This will ensure that they use their own words, and not those of the rhyme. The jingle is then repeated by selected children.

Part IV. (Application).

Free drawing lesson on the subject of the rhyme, and conversation. Teacher pins up a sheet of brown paper on the blackboard and asks for suggestions to help her in depicting the rhyme. On one half of the paper she is instructed to make a hill, and the children describe what sort of a thing a hill is. Then Jack is represented on the ground with the pail, and Jill in the act of falling. On the other half of the paper the teacher draws a bed with the mother shown bending over Jack, whose head is plastered. Jill is standing by. Jack is not crying now—he is a brave boy. Teacher asks the children to tell her exactly the order in which she drew the various parts of the picture.

Children try to represent the story, with paper and crayons, or free-arm boards and chalk (the latter if it is the babies' class). They are encouraged to

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draw different stages in the incident, so that the drawings shall not be merely memory-copies of the teacher's. They explain in turn what the various figures on the drawings mean. (Probably with the youngest children of all there will be many drawings with no meaning intelligible to the teacher : but the children will know what they intended them to mean.) Some few children might be asked to describe the best attempts of other members of the class. On another day the children will sing the words of the rhyme to a simple tune.

Conversation Lessons based upon a Simple Poem : 'Bed-Time' (Tom Hood).

This poem, selected for infants in their second year at school, will require a series of lessons. Consequently, it is only possible to outline suggestive treatment for the five stanzas. The methods are differentiated in each case, as variety of method is essential in order to maintain interest. The children will look forward to the lessons more eagerly when they discover that the next verse is to be learned in a fresh way each time.

"Bed-Time."

1. *"The evening is coming,
 The sun sinks to rest ;
 The rooks are all flying
 Straight home to the nest.
 ' Caw ! ' says the rook, as he flies overhead.
 ' It's time little people were going to bed ! '"*

Conversation on bed-time and the close of day elicits the fact that the light goes and it grows dark. Why?—The sun has gone to bed. Elicit that the birds also go to their nests. A child describes a rook. The rook is a large bird which builds its nest in the highest branches of trees. It does not sing, but cries, "Caw!" A child is chosen to represent the rook. Separate children repeat the first two couplets under the direction of the teacher. The 'rook,' addressing all the children, announces: "Caw! It's time little people were going to bed." When the children have got the sequence of things in their minds, the teacher instructs a child to hold up a card with a red sun upon it, which he dips slowly at the right moment. One child announces: "The evening is coming, the sun sinks to rest," another adds the third and fourth lines; and the child who is impersonating the rook recites the last couplet. The method is repeated with various children, and the rest of the class are encouraged to prompt them when necessary.

2. *"The flowers are closing,
 The daisy's asleep;
 The primrose is buried
 In slumber so deep;
Shut up for the night is the pimpernel red;
It's time little people were going to bed."*

The method selected for teaching this stanza is dramatic instead of purely conversational. Children are selected to represent the flowers. They sit on chairs and pretend to sleep. Questions elicit from

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the class that when the daisy sleeps it closes its petals. Accordingly, the 'daisy' wears a paper cap of yellow with a closed-up fringe of white strips, and sleeps. A child points to the sleeping child, and repeats the first couplet after the teacher.

The child representing the primrose has real or artificial primroses in its hair. A drawing on brown paper will illustrate the pimpernel (a summer flower), the child impersonating it may wear a scarlet tam-o'-shanter pinned together at the top. Various children say the lines consecutively after the teacher, pointing to the sleeping flowers; and the last line is the signal for all the children to pretend to be falling asleep.

3. *"The butterfly, drowsy,
 Has folded its wing;
 The bees are returning;
 No more the birds sing.
 Their labours are over, their nestlings are fed;
 It's time little people were going to bed."*

This stanza may be prepared as a conversational drawing lesson in which the teacher, under the verbal instructions of the children, illustrates in turn,—a butterfly resting on a leaf, bees returning to the hive, a bird on a bough with its head under its wing, and the mother bird feeding its nestlings. The lines would then be taught consecutively with reference to the drawings, and children encouraged to recite the stanza, line by line, individually.

4. *"Here comes the pony,
 His work is all done,
 Down through the meadow
 He takes a good run ;
 Up go his heels, and down goes his head ;
 It's time little people were going to bed."*

A play lesson—the pony. This affords scope for a boy to indulge in pantomime representing the pony. He goes down on all fours ; his harness is removed ; and he kicks and rears in the newly-regained freedom of the pasture. Various children describe his actions in their own words, and then in the words of the poem. The stanza is recited individually.

5. The children will be found sufficiently eager to learn the last stanza ; and the individual method of repetition may be used throughout.

- "Good-night, little people,
 Good-night and good-night ;
 Sweet dreams to your eyelids
 Till dawning of light.
The evening has come, there's no more to be said :
It's time little people were going to bed."*

'Bed-Time' is an example of an almost perfect child's poem ; and its construction shows a remarkable parallelism to the Herbartian method. The 'preparation' is supplied by the first stanza ; Nature's time of rest is presented in the second ; the third stanza associates animal life with plant life ; in the fourth the idea is formulated with reference to the pony ; and the closing stanza points the application to young children.

Story-telling to Little Children.

As has already been suggested, the natural place in point of time for story-telling to very little children may be held to be subsequent to the game of 'make-believe.' However, there is no reason to defer the telling of simple stories in the training of those who have reached school age. Any tales which are not beyond the child's powers will serve. Both myths and nature-stories are well within the understanding of little children. The older fairy tales, with their charm of simplicity and glorious improbability, have been related to children of all ages for the sheer delight of entertainment. As a storehouse of folk-stories the collection of the brothers Grimm is difficult to improve upon. The tales of Hans Christian Andersen, though more modern in form and subject, are also frequently founded upon the lore of antiquity. But, because they are mostly shorter and simpler in character, it will be found that Grimm's tales are more suitable for the very young, and Andersen's for the older children. No marked delimitation may be made, however; it is a question for the teacher's personal taste and power of adaptation. Of all the modern writers, probably Kipling has succeeded best in his 'Just-so' Stories, but their length and wealth of striking detail render them specially suitable for children who have got beyond the province of the infants' department.

The story for which suggestive treatment is

sketched in this section is based upon incidents in the history of Tom Thumb.

**Telling a Fairy-tale—Infants in their Second Year—
Tom Thumb.**

It will be noted that the assistance of the scholars is invoked wherever practicable.

Part I. (Preparation).

The teacher shows a tiny doll dressed as Tom Thumb ; and tells the class that the story is about Tom Thumb, or 'Thumbling,' who was no bigger than his father's thumb. Most children grow bigger day by day, but little Tom did not.

Part II. (Presentation).

(a) The teacher illustrates Tom's mother making a pudding. The doll is stood upon the edge of the bowl, and allowed to fall into the pudding. That is what happened to Tom—his foot slipped and he fell head over heels into the pudding. Teacher affects not to see him, and goes through the pantomime of putting the pudding into the pot to boil, narrating each incident as she proceeds.

(b) Because the pudding will keep jumping up and down in a strange manner, the mother takes it out of the pot and gives it to a man at the door. Tom cries out as soon as he gets the pudding out of his mouth, and the frightened man drops it and runs away. The fall breaks the pudding and sets Tom free. He runs off home. His mother kisses him and

puts him to bed. Teacher illustrates this by giving the imaginary pudding, wrapped in a duster, to a child, who pretends to be frightened by the noise the doll is making inside, and drops it. The figure is taken out, and the teacher illustrates Tom's return to his mother.

(c) A plant is put upon the table, and teacher ties the figure of little Tom to a leaf by a thread. A child impersonates the cow which eats the leaf and Tom Thumb. Tom cries, "Mother, mother!" "Where are you, my son, my own dear Tom?" says the mother. "Here, mother, here, in the red cow's mouth!" The teacher represents the mother crying: the cow opens its mouth, and Tom is recovered. The teacher puts him into her apron and takes Tom home.

(d) How Tom went to Court. He falls into the sea and a fish swallows him. This may be illustrated by a child concealing the figure in its blouse or pinafore. The fish is caught and sent as a present to the King. When it was cut open, there was little Tom Thumb. Two children, taking the parts of rider and horse, represent the King on horseback with Thumbling in his hand. When it rains the figure is put into the King's pocket to sleep until the rain is over. Teacher places the doll in a doll's chair placed upon the table, as Tom was at Court, and describes the tiny coach drawn by six mice that the King gave to Tom.

(e) The Queen is jealous of Thumbling because she has not a new coach also. A little girl represents

the Queen, and, under the teacher's directions, tells the King that Tom Thumb has been rude to her. Tom is next missed from Court. The children are shown the figure hiding in a large shell, intended for the empty snail's shell of the story. The teacher proceeds, relating how Tom escaped being found by perching himself upon a butterfly's back. The butterfly flew from field to field until it flitted back to the King's Court. (A picture is shown in which Tom is represented seated on the butterfly's back.) The King, Queen and Courtiers try to catch the butterfly. Tom slips into a can of water, but is fished out. The Queen shuts him in a mouse-trap. The cat (one of the children) takes him for a mouse and breaks the trap, setting Thumbling free. A spider takes Tom for a fly, and tries to eat him. He fights bravely and well, but at last the spider kills him. The King and all his Court mourn for little Tom Thumb.

Part III. (Association).

The class makes crayon drawings of various incidents in the story, different subjects being given to each to depict.

Part IV. (Formulation and Application).

The children act the story, as far as possible without the intervention of the teacher. A child tells the story in its own words after an interval of some days. The incidents or the objects mentioned in the story are made the subject of the modelling lesson.

**Outline of a Conversation Lesson on a Kitten—
Children of five or six.**

A child brings a pet kitten to school.

I. The kitten is placed upon the table, and plays with a piece of string.

II. Its appearance is discussed with reference to its fur, eyes (sees through slits), tail, number of legs, drinking a saucer of milk (how it laps), its tongue is rough.

III. Comparison with a child. Skin instead of fur. The child's eyes have round windows in them (not slits). The child has two arms and two legs. A child does not lap up milk. The child's tongue is smooth.

IV. Children are questioned upon the differences noted in II. and III.

V. A game of cats and mice ; or a song about a kitten ; drawing or modelling a kitten.

Teaching a Jingle.

Occasionally to vary the method—for the greater variety of presentation that can be employed the more will the children's interest be stimulated—the words of a simple jingle may be learned first, before there is any conversation about it. 'Ten Little Nigger Boys' is a suitable rhyme. When the words are known, the rhyme is then played as a game. The children act each incident, and are encouraged to make their own suggestions for the performance of them. Experiment will show the great ingenuity

the little people can display in overcoming the difficulties of representation.

In this particular jingle the teacher can pretend to be frightened when the children act each catastrophe. When she does this, a child will frequently say: "Don't be frightened; don't cry—it's only 'tending!" The children delight in the knowledge that teacher is pretending too, and that their attempts to comfort her are also 'make-believe.'

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST STEPS IN READING.

READING is the school-subject about which probably there has been more debate than any other part of the curriculum. Some points upon which there seems to be small chance of agreement are: the age at which regular instruction in reading should commence; the special methods to be employed; and whether or no the names as well as the sounds of letters should be learned. The truth of the matter is that these points depend in a great measure upon the particular conditions that obtain in various schools and districts. Probably, the thing most earnestly to be desired in the early stages of learning to read is simplicity of method. The simpler the method adopted the more possible will it become to continue the method, or an extension of it, through the infants' to the junior classes. The importance of this consideration is perhaps over-estimated, for, when the initial difficulties are once mastered by the child, all methods are alike to him. For, when a child has learned to recognise words—and no teacher can say in the case of a particular child that it is

necessarily by means of the special method taught—he henceforward discards the means whereby this result was obtained, and devotes his attention to the reading matter. There is little doubt that some of the modern methods of teaching to read are elaborate devices for teaching that which may be learned simply and directly ; and the teacher is tempted to adopt these because they appeal to her notion of intelligent instruction. In the end, whatever the selected method may be, each teacher will probably modify the system more or less, in accordance with her own ideas and the special conditions of the class she has to teach.

Letters and their Sounds.

In theory it is immaterial whether the names of the letters should or should not be learned together with their sounds. In practice it is probably better that they should be so learned. In the majority of cases, when children come to school they are already acquainted with the names of some letters of the alphabet ; and to insist upon their sound-values (which are subject to many variations), and to suppress their names, is to cause confusion in the mind of the child. We may illustrate the point by an analogy. Children quickly learn the names of various occupations, such as that of the policeman, the postman, the baker, the sweep, etc., before associating them with the functions these persons fulfil. In each case the general name calls up a picture of the individual, and the child associates

with this the work done by each. In much the same way it is probable that the names of letters are associated with their form, and assist by suggesting the sound of the letters.

If English spelling were phonetic, of course it would be altogether unnecessary for the child to know the names of the arbitrary signs called letters. As it is, a knowledge of the names of the letters is requisite in the case of words that are not phonetic. It is possible to recognise such words by their general form, that is, by the *look-and-say* method; the difficulty arises when the child attempts to write them, or to form them by the means of movable letters.

A purely phonetic method of reading must remain impracticable so long as the present system of spelling exists. Some of the reasons for this fact are that: (1) The same letter, as 'a,' has several different sounds; (2) A single consonantal sound is represented by a combination of two letters, as in the case of 'th,' 'ch,' 'sh,' etc.; (3) There are frequently two or more ways of writing the same sound, as 'favour,' 'physic,' and 'tough'; (4) Many letters in words are silent, as in 'same,' 'hour,' 'know'; and (5) Groups of letters are often employed to express an indivisible sound, as in 'plough,' 'thought,' 'through,' 'slaughter.' These do not exhaust all the difficulties. As, however, the anomalies do not, after all, make up the greater proportion of English words (and these, unfortunately, occur most frequently in the simpler ones), the best method

of learning to read is by a sensible combination of a phonetic system with the look-and-say or the spelling method for irregular words.

Bearing in mind that the child has to learn to write words as well as to read them, sooner or later it becomes necessary for him to know the names of the letters as well as their sounds. And when, as has already been noted, many children on coming to school already know the alphabet, no reason remains why the class as a whole should postpone learning the letter-names for any appreciable time. Indeed, as the learning of the letters may form the basis of various interesting play-lessons in which the names are learned in the best way of all, unconsciously and happily, there is every reason why they should be so learned together with the simpler sounds they represent.

It is the practice to teach the names and forms of the letters by association. And therein lies a danger. When association is excessive the child often remembers the associated idea and forgets the name or sound it is intended to accompany. One finds a child looking at a capital I, and muttering : " That's a lamp-post ! " or, " That's mother's linen-post ! *What* is it called ? " Like the Scots child, he " kens the letter by sight," but cannot give you its name. So, one sometimes finds the teacher obscuring a child's recognition by burdening it with excessive association of ideas : O is mother's ring, or a hoop ; M is a swing with a very small seat ; D, d, P, p, R, and q, are puddings in various positions on the dish

—but all puddings. For simple ideas, the shortest and most reliable method is by way of the memory, aided by the senses of sight and touch. If associations are needed children will make them readily enough by themselves, when playing with the separate letters.

We cannot do better than quote from the Board of Education pamphlet on the Montessori System in connection with the subject of Reading and Writing : “ He (the child) learns to distinguish the different forms by his sense of touch as well as by his sense of sight. His next step is to touch the various letters which are made of emery paper gummed on to cardboard. When touching these he passes his fingers all over them and makes the actual movement that he will later on when writing. . . . Meanwhile he has been learning the names and sounds of the letters, having begun to do this as soon as he began to touch the letters. He learns the vowels first and then the consonants. With the sound of each vowel a consonant sound is at once united and a syllable is thus formed. . . . If a child fails to recognise a letter which he has learned, it is found that as soon as he *touches* it, the memory of the name almost invariably comes back to him. . . . For the composing or building up of words, which may be begun before all the letters are known, cut-out paper letters are used, the vowels being blue and the consonants pink. The teacher pronounces a word very clearly, dwelling on the sound, and the child eagerly picks out the required letters from the box. When he puts them back in the box he has to find the right

places for them, and all this helps to make him familiar with the look of the various letters."

Other practical methods of memorising letters and combinations will suggest themselves, as exercises with chalk, crayon, or pencil, or modelling, stick-laying, etc. The script letters will be written in sand, though care is needed not to confuse the children by attempting this exercise too soon.

Reading Lessons and Reading Books.

The point at which reading will commence will be determined for any particular school by the progress made in the preliminary exercises to which we have referred. There is considerable difference of opinion as to what formal training is suitable for infants; but it is generally agreed that reading should be practised in the infants' department, and it is usually regarded as *the* instructional subject at this stage. After the children have become familiar with the sounds of the letters as well as their forms, by means of the play-lessons, the teacher will select for the first reading lessons a number of words which have an interest for the children, and which have already been used in the various conversation lessons. In these preliminary lessons no books are used, the words being printed upon the blackboard or built up with movable letters placed in a groove at its lower edge. The teacher takes care to select words which may be grouped together according to similarity of sound. When the children can recognise a large number of common words from the blackboard or

the reading sheets, then is the time to introduce books suited to their capacity.

Little need be said nowadays concerning the requirements of a good reading-book. The publishers have seen to it that their primers are well-printed in large type, and made attractive by pictures and interesting matter. The system of graduating the text is sometimes more open to criticism. Occasionally the words are selected with an eye to the number of letters or syllables they contain, rather than to their phonetic difficulty. The shorter words are usually the most irregular, and anomalies require to be treated a few at a time, so as not to fatigue the children or to destroy their interest. Most of the books now published are on the phonetic method, and fulfil their purpose admirably. The reason for selecting a *course* of readers on a carefully formulated system is to ensure practice in every variety of word-formation that the child is likely to meet, so that the whole ground of word-making is covered by successive books. Various teachers interpret a method to suit themselves and the needs of their scholars. This fact does not work against the success of the instruction of the department so long as the general method is not unduly departed from, and the teaching is intelligent. In schools where the children are taught by a succession of teachers it is not so urgent that the exact details of a method should be fixed, as that the *scheme* should be continuous, and this may be secured by a careful selection of the primers.

We think it a good plan to use at least two sets of

readers in each class. One set will be for instruction on systematic lines, and the other for general practice in reading. The first is to ensure proper graduation and the mastering of the various irregularities of the language, the second that greater interest and variety of treatment will be introduced into the reading-lesson than might otherwise be the case. The sets of readers, other than those chosen for formal instruction, should certainly include an easy story-book. It is too much to expect that at first very young children will read in any other way than word by word, for ability to phrase properly can only come with practice ; but teachers need not be afraid to use easy story-books which include occasional words presenting difficulty to the children. To quote from the ' Suggestions for the Teaching of English ' : " They (teachers) need not explain and teach every word once for all the first time it is met with, for even if a word is not remembered from one occasion, it will recur probably a score of times during the next few years."

The Phonetic Method.

There is to-day one general method in use for teaching to read. That is to say, one broad method, which is variously interpreted in points of detail. This is the phonetic method, in which words are decomposed into their elementary sounds which the children are taught to utter separately. As soon as the powers of the letters are known, the children are taught to sound the vowels in connection with the

consonant that follows or precedes them (usually the latter), and thus the method becomes almost immediately phono-syllabic. Words which cannot be classified in any phonetic system are learned by the look-and-say method. When this is done, and the word is named as a whole, the individual child will often be found unconsciously to impress the form of the word upon itself by spelling out the component letters—which is the old *literal* method. That is why the practice of building up irregular words by means of cut-out letters is so useful: the child learns to recognise the word as a whole so much more quickly and with less liability to such mistakes as misreading *from* for *form*, *try* for *toy*, *where* for *there*, *split* for *spilt*, etc.

Occasionally the phonetic method presents difficulties to very young children. In the mental development of the child, simple memory is usually in advance of the perception of sound-values. For this reason, in class-teaching there is no great advantage in taking the work of the first primer from the book. If the ground is covered from the reading-sheets or the blackboard or by the use of movable letters, the child accommodates itself to the process of reading in accordance with its own mental powers. With some children the power to recognise words is gained from simple memory of their general form, or of the letters—a visual act. With others the words are recognised phonetically; and it would puzzle the teacher in most cases to tell exactly by which means particular children master the preliminary

work. If simple exercises in spelling and writing accompany the exercises in reading (spelling with movable letters, and writing with the sand tray), the child learns the early words literally as well as phonetically, which is a distinct gain.

The chief consideration in selecting a course of phonetic reading for a school is to ensure that the system on which it is based has been so carefully formulated that the formation of all varieties of words is covered ; and that every attempt has been made to associate words which may appear to be irregular but are not so after all. This has the effect of reducing the number of apparent anomalies, and thus lessening the child's difficulties. There is no need to restrict the child at the beginning to words of one syllable, when readers are introduced. If the children are trained to divide words into their syllables from the first, words like 'win-ter' are more easy of recognition than many words of one syllable, such as 'eye,' 'they,' 'hair,' 'buy,' and 'laugh.'

General Conclusions.

The chief exercises that will be found practicable in the first year or eighteen months of training are : (1) Practice in the sounds of the various letters, with (?) a knowledge of their names ; (2) Blackboard printing and movable letter drill by the teacher, accompanied by word-building, by means of card-board letters, by the children ; and (3) Preliminary work from reading-sheets, followed by exercises with the primer. The teacher will use her own devices

in details of method, though avoiding departures from the uniform system of the school. Children at this stage will find pleasure in being able to name words correctly. The subject-matter will be obscured by the difficulty they find in naming the words, but with practice, even here, they will begin to find an interest in the meaning of the text ; and quickness in recognising the constantly recurring words, like ' the,' ' at,' ' to,' etc., will assist them to make a beginning at phrasing. The pleasure that the ability to read will give may be illustrated to the children by the teacher reading from a story-book from time to time, and the exercise will act as an incentive to the children to acquire the art.

We have reserved one last point that is worthy of consideration. Children are admitted to the infants' department at all times of the year, and in all stages of mental development. Some have already acquired some scraps of knowledge, others are entirely ignorant. These facts make special organisation for reading-instruction desirable in some schools, as, through a want of any uniformity of attainment, the progress of the children will be hampered. To avoid this it is certainly desirable that the children, at least above the babies' class, should be carefully classified for reading. This classification needs to be modified from time to time as progress is made. It is troublesome to arrange (in some schools, owing to the building and staffing conditions, it may be most difficult) but the benefit to the children will more than justify it.

CHAPTER V.

READING LESSONS FOR INFANTS.

SOME types of reading lessons, which are given in outline, have been selected for inclusion in this chapter. At this stage the aim is to give the children the power to recognise simple words, and to interest them in the process. They should also learn how to attempt to discover words which they meet for the first time, by applying the principles of the phonetic system. For a time the subject-matter of what they read will be subordinated largely to these aims.

The Babies' Class.

Here are gathered the children who have not been to school before, and have made no progress towards reading. Very few children should stay in the babies' room for a longer time than six months : many will be drafted into the next class before this period has elapsed. As the babies are admitted at all times of the year, the preparatory work in reading requires constant recapitulation, and consequently great variety of treatment to sustain interest. It will be most effective in the form of play-lessons. Broadly,

when the children leave this class, they will have informally acquired a knowledge of the sounds (and names ?) of the various letters ; they will be able to recognise them from their forms ; and be able to read a number of phonetic words of one or two letters. The scheme will include the work of the first primer or reading-sheet of the systematic course selected.

The forms and sounds of the letters will be learned from handling the various cut-out letters, or picking them out from the boxes at the teacher's direction, talking about their different shapes, and filling in the outlines of the letters with crayon. The children will compose words of two letters by arranging the letters on their own tables, or the teacher will build them up under the children's directions in a similar way, or else print them on the blackboard.

The children will thus cover the contents of the first primer, by means of practice with the movable letters, from the printed words on the blackboard, and by exercises from the reading-sheets. Throughout, the teacher will give the children constant individual practice. Words like *be* and *he* and *we*, *if* and *of*, *as*, *is* and *us*, etc., may be actually formed in front of the class by pairs of children each of whom holds a large letter above its head. This is always a popular game for the babies.

The Second Class.

Children between five and six, who have been promoted from the babies' room.

This class will have regular short practices from the reading-sheets to familiarise them with the look of the more common words. They will read a primer (perhaps two, if the organisation of the department allows this class a twelve-months' scheme) from the selected course of phonetic reading, and, in addition, a selection of easy stories. (In these last some of the words will not be learned ; the teacher will only name them as they are met—so that even here the interest of the subject-matter will be realised to an extent.)

A Reading Lesson to the Second Class. Fifteenth Lesson in Part I. of 'Reading in a Twelvemonth' (A. Sonnenschein).

The book is selected merely as a basis for the lesson. Although excellent results have been obtained by this course of systematic reading-instruction, it is not pretended that it is necessarily the best course for all schools and with all teachers. We are assuming it is the selected course in use for the purposes of these notes. The lesson will be taken in three parts.

(a) *Drill Lesson with Movable Letters.* The teacher places the letter *e* in the groove at the lower edge of the blackboard ; and asks for the sound of *e*. Several children pronounce it in turn. The letter *t* is placed at some distance to the right of the first letter, and its sound is elicited from the class. The letters are slid along the groove until they are in juxtaposition, and the class merge the separate sounds of *e* and *t* together until the syllable *et* is formed. The ending

for the lesson is *-et*. (The children have already learned the *-at* and *-it* series in previous lessons.) In front of the special ending for the lesson the letters *b, l, m, n, p, s, j, w* and *g* are placed, and the words thus formed are named by various children in the class. The same words are next printed by the teacher in the reverse order upon the blackboard, and individual children are called upon to name them, until every child has read at least one of the words. If time allows, children also make up sentences containing each of the words.

(b) *Reading Lesson*. After the primers are opened, selected children read the drill words in turn whilst the rest point to them with their fingers. As many children are practised as possible, special attention being paid to the more backward ones. The exercise is then read round the class : 1. Let me sit on my pet ox. 2. Let me get my cat ; it is by the mat. 3. The cat met the rat, and bit it. 4. That mat is wet ; do not sit on it. 5. Sit on the box, that is not wet. 6. Let me fit on my hat.

(c) *Word-building Lesson*. Each child is provided with a box of letters, and is told to build up a specified word on the desk. The words are given in the order of the exercise from left to right, so that when the words have been built up and corrected, various children may be selected to go round behind the seats, and read the words in order. This device makes an excellent revision lesson ; the children enjoy it ; and it provides individual practice in spelling.

Reading Lesson for First Class Infants.

Children between six and seven. Two pages from an easy story-reader. (These pages are selected from 'Old English Tales, II.,' Macmillan and Co., The Children's Classics, Primary.) The First Class will read during the year a primer (or two primers) of the systematic course, preparatory to the work of Standard I. of the Junior Section, with at least two other books (either easy story-readers, or containing short continuous lessons).

Matter of the Lesson.

"Snowdrop — Snowdrop and the Queen."

"Once upon a time, when the snow fell from the sky, a Queen sat at a win-dow and sewed. As she was sew-ing, and watch-ing the snow fall, she pricked her fing-er, and three drops of blood fell on the snow.

"And as the red looked so pretty on the white snow, she thought, 'Oh that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of this win-dow frame.'

"Soon after, she had a little girl, who was as white as snow, as red as blood, and with very black hair. Then the Queen died.

"After a year had gone by, the King took an-other wife. She was a love-ly lady, but very proud, and could not bear that any-one should be pret-ti-er than she was. She had a fair-y glass, and when she

walked up to it and looked at her-self in it, she said :

“ ‘ *Little glass upon the wall,
Who is fair-est a-mong us all ?* ’

“ Then the glass said :

“ ‘ *Lady Queen, so grand and tall,
You are the fair-est of them all.* ’

“ And she was hap-py, for she knew the glass only said what was true.”

(a) *Preliminary Practice in New or Difficult Words.* During the word-building lesson of the day previous to this reading lesson, the new or difficult words which occur in the pages to be read will be built up on the blackboard. The children will direct the teacher what letters to employ, as there will not be time for each child to make the words with separate sets of letters. The words selected for this method of treatment will depend upon the progress in reading the class has made. In the earlier part of the year the teacher would probably select the following : Snow-drop, Queen, sew-ed, and sew-ing (non-phonetic), watch-ing, three, blood, pret-ty, pret-ti-er, pret-ti-est, fair-y, fair-est, an-other, love-ly, proud, white (silent *h*), knew, (silent *k*), thought (non-phonetic), died, bear (non-phonetic), glass, hap-py.

The reading lesson of the following day will test the value of the word-building lesson.

(b) *Reading.* Various children will read a line or more of the passage whilst all point. The more difficult words should present no difficulties now, at

any rate, to the class generally. If a child fails to name a word, after trying by the methods of the reading course in use, another child would be asked to say it. When the pages have been read through once, they may be read again by different children in larger portions. As far as possible every child should be called upon to take some part besides pointing to the words as they are read.

(c) *Conversation.* Questions on the reading matter to be answered by various children. Where was the Queen sitting? What was she doing? What happened to her as she sat sewing? What became of the blood which fell from her finger? What was the Queen's wish? What sort of a lady was the second Queen? Can you tell me anything about her fairy glass? What did the proud Queen say to the glass? What did the glass reply? Why did the answer please the Queen? etc.

Reading Lesson for the First Class.

The object of this form of reading lesson is to introduce variety of method, to stimulate interest in the reading, and to show the children that it is possible to read about the things with which they are familiar through conversation. The latter will disabuse their minds once for all of the notion that the reading of printed matter is something artificial. The method outlined here may be used for younger children also, if a lesson of suitable difficulty is planned.

Jack and Jill. This lesson was taken previously

in the form of a dramatised jingle for the babies. The rhyme will be known to the class.

(a) *Preparatory Word-building Lesson.* The following words will be built up by the teacher, and named by individual scholars : *Jill, hill, Jack, got, trot, fet-ch, mend-ed, pail, fell, fast, down, crown, brown, broke, broken, came, home, tum-ble, tum-bl-ing, bed, head, went, wa-ter, af-ter, could, ca-per, pa-per, vin-e-gar.* The other words of the lesson : *a, and, to, up, the, he, his, him, as, of, got, how, did, in, it, they, put, with* and *saw*, will be familiar to the class.

(b) *Reading.* The teacher prints the story of ' Jack and Jill ' in her own words upon the black-board, the children watching. When she has written one sentence, she will call upon one or two children to read it. The children will help each other with mistakes and difficulties that arise. The other sentences will be dealt with in the same way. *Note.*—In order that the children should actually read the lesson, and not repeat from memory, the text of the story will be altered freely, though the words which occur in the original rhyme will be employed as far as possible. When the teacher has printed all the sentences on the board, they will read something like this :

" Jack and Jill."

" They went up a hill to fetch water in the pail. Jack had a tumble. He fell down. Jill came tumbling down. Jack got up. Jill saw him caper home as fast as he could trot. His crown was

broken, and they mended it. They put vinegar on brown paper, and put the paper on his broken head."

The children will read portions of the version in turn.

(c) *Recapitulation and Word-building.* Boxes of letters are given out to the class, and the teacher tells each child to build a word, giving each child consecutively a word *of the actual rhyme*. She corrects mistakes, and then the children each read in turn the words which have been built, and thus reproduce the original rhyme.

The teacher prints under the children's directions any words which have presented difficulties, *e.g. fetch, pail, crown, brown, broken, tumbling, head, water, after*. The brown paper containing the words of the preparatory word-building lesson is next pinned to the blackboard, and the children read the words in turn as a revision exercise.

Reading a Story to Infants.

This is a welcome change from the narration of a story by the teacher. If the story chosen be well within the grasp of the children—though at the same time it should be considerably in advance of the readers in point of difficulty—and selected with an eye to its power to charm and interest, the hearers will gain some notion of the pleasure that the ability to read will give them, when they have acquired it. Short tales from Grimm and Andersen, or selections from 'In the Child's World' by Emilie Poulson, or from 'The Story Hour'

by Kate Wiggin and Nora Smith, or from the various books of myths, fairy-tales, and nature-stories that are upon the market, are most suitable for reading. There is no end to the supply of excellent matter. As far as possible the stories read should be related to the other lessons of the week. The teacher will read slowly that the children may follow the meaning, and if she somewhat exaggerates the emphasis, the children will better grasp the narrative. Variety of expression helps, and little children revel in such devices as we have all heard used in the story of the Three Bears, where the Big Bear growls, the Mother Bear speaks in a higher key, and the Baby Bear squeaks. There is every reason why simple stories connected with geography and history should be introduced into the scheme of the Infants' School.

Poetry Reading in the Infants' Department.

It is seldom possible to have a whole book of children's poetry read by the upper class in an infants' school, though this is sometimes done, but the children should occasionally read short selected poems from a book of verse, and the teacher will now and again read a simple poem whilst the children follow the words in their books.

Sectional Reading.

In the upper class it is practicable, during the last term of the year, to form the best readers into a separate reading section in which the children are

left to attempt to read a book for themselves, whilst less proficient children are specially taught by the teacher. The practice is a good one. The members of this section help each other, and ask the teacher about difficult words when she comes round to see how they are progressing.

CHAPTER VI.

READING IN THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

General Considerations.

By the time children have attained the age of seven years the principal mechanical difficulties of reading should have been mastered ; that is to say, the stage of reading better described as ' word-naming ' has been passed, and the children will be able to read with some degree of fluency, and to phrase more or less correctly. So far as phonetic words are concerned, even if they are now met in the reading matter for the first time, little difficulty should be encountered. Considerable practice, however, will still be necessary in the case of more uncommon words that are irregular in form ; and exercises to cultivate correct pronunciation and fluent reading will continue to be needed. For these reasons reading aloud will still be the general form of the reading lessons.

The mechanical work of the junior section, *i.e.* for children from the age of seven to ten, will naturally include regular periods spent in word-drill, chiefly

as a preparation for the difficulties of the successive reading lessons. These periods may be either a few minutes previous to the reading lessons, or occasional lessons which may be described as word-building lessons. The former method is preferable, as five minutes' preparatory word-drill is less fatiguing and probably more beneficial than formal lessons of some length. Because practice in spelling will be taken almost concurrently with the reading, this word-drill will consist of the longer irregular words, which the expanding vocabulary of successive classes renders desirable. The painstaking teacher will classify the exceptions as they are encountered in the reading or composition, noting them for future drill-lessons and revision, in a rough note-book. Other mechanical work will be practice in the correct phrasing of sentences selected from the readers. This may be taken from time to time in the oral composition, besides incidentally in the course of the reading.

It will be found that word-drill preparatory to class-reading is of great assistance when the class is organised for sectional reading lessons which will be described later. Systematic observation of word syllables makes progress in reading and pronunciation more rapid and sure. "Children are very easily interested in the observation of the sounds they make, and soon become acute critics of any deviation from the normal in the speech of those around them. . . . A useful exercise may be found in selecting sentences containing several examples

of sounds,¹ often pronounced indistinctly or improperly, for repetition by the scholars individually, the faults to be noted and corrected by the listening scholars themselves.”² Children should also be encouraged to recognise statements, questions, and commands by their form ; and taught to give the correct sentence-accent from the teacher’s pattern reading.

Stories that have previously been told orally to the children will now be selected for continuous reading, *e.g.* the matter of Kingsley’s ‘ Waterbabies ’ may be read from Jack’s ‘ Told to the Children ’ Series, or the old Greek and Norse myths and the fairy-tales which have been related may now be read from ‘ The Children’s Classics ’ (Macmillan), etc. Continuous reading of easy narrative will be employed in all junior classes, and a portion of this, at any rate, should be silent.

Carefully graded readers are more desirable at this stage than continued practice in any one system of phonetic reading. The phonetic readers should have served their purpose by this time in teaching the mechanics of reading, and, if the system be carried too far, the practice of selecting reading merely to include isolated words presenting special difficulty is calculated to destroy interest. When once the aim of a particular system has been attained,

¹ *Chewb* for *tube*, *jew* for *dew*, *on’y* for *only*, *wa’er* for *water*, *free* for *three*, *fink* for *think*, omitted *h*, redundant *h*, omitted final *d* or *g*, etc.

² The earlier ‘ Suggestions ’ of 1912.

the system should give place to free practice in more literary reading, in the course of which new words will be mastered as they occur.

It is important to bear in mind the difference between the atmosphere of the junior classes and that of the infants' section. So far as possible the free methods of the latter should be retained at first, to be gradually exchanged for longer lessons and instruction of a more formal kind. Thus, a certain degree of continuity of method will be accompanied by a gradual advance in treatment. Children will now be capable of more sustained effort, and the teacher should not disregard the bracing effect of conscious work. There is a marked tendency nowadays to attempt at all times various artificial means of stimulating interest, with the result that some such stimulant is constantly required. Some teachers fail to realise that in a well-taught school children *enjoy* work, and the sense of difficulties overcome is very pleasant to them. Mental tonics and stimulants would appear to be very similar in effect upon the child to the use of medicines and spirits upon the adult. To be effective they need to be employed occasionally and in moderation.

Throughout the course of instruction the children require not only to be taught to know, but they should constantly apply what they have learned in some practical way. Consequently the reading lesson will generally be followed by some definite exercise, either the oral summarising of the matter

read or questions upon it, or, when possible, a short exercise in written composition.

The Purpose of Reading in the Junior Classes.

We have already referred to the gradual change from the informal methods of the infants' school, with its free lessons and active movement, to the more formal instructional methods of the junior school. This change should be insensible to the child, or there is danger of a dislike for serious work being created. It is possible, however, to exaggerate the danger, as the attitude of the average youngster who is beginning to be conscious of having outgrown the infant class is one of great ambition to discontinue mere play-lessons and to get to work seriously. The only thing that is likely to prove a set-back to this proper, if vain-glorious, attitude of mind is the discovery that the new work is exceedingly difficult. The teacher will, therefore, aim at making progress as easy as possible, and to see that reading lessons are pleasurable and well within the grasp of the promoted children. If this is so, the interest of the work will give a keen zest to the elementary study of literature.

There will be no break at this stage in the matter of the reading. Rhymes and poetry of a slightly more ambitious character, but well within the powers of the children, will still be studied, and a fair proportion of them memorised. The reading will be as varied as possible, and will include pure narrative and incident, as well as the myths and

nature-stories of the previous course. The reading-matter may contain ethical instruction, and indeed should do so, but this will always be incidental and informal. We shall have a word to say later on the child's attitude to the moral of a fairy-tale or story.

The new aim that reading may now be made to serve is the gradual inculcation of an intellectual attitude towards literature, *i.e.* some preliminary notion of taste and feeling. Reading at this stage begins to appeal to the emotions and the intellect; and if the child is going to grow up to love reading and to discover an intelligent appreciation of our wealth of national literature, he must not be disgusted by the teacher adopting a too ambitious standard. Work should be as simple as possible, whilst marking a distinct advance upon former reading. If this is not so, the amount of explanation that will be necessary will only distract the child in his study, and be a tax upon his understanding. The early treatment of literature is a serious problem to the teacher. To quote again from the 'Suggestions': "If we try to create a taste for it and fail, the result is not neutral—a passive state which at some later date may give way to liking. We are sure to leave behind an active distaste. One of the richest sources of encouragement to a life of wide sympathies, of noble ideals, and of courageous endeavour, is dried up, and one of the most lasting means of pleasure is lost."

Practical Details.

Our first consideration is the choice of suitable reading books. The language and the subject-matter employed should be carefully graded, simple, and interesting, though there is no disadvantage if some portions call for explanation from the teacher. The child wants to feel that he is progressing, and also needs to be sufficiently interested to wish to know more of what he has read. Continuous stories of romance, imagination, and humorous nonsense of an elementary kind—which last is unfortunately often omitted—should be included. Stimulating adventures of all sorts, about fairies and the ancient heroes, of great men and women, and children's experiences are what are most needed—bright, stirring matter which will appeal to the romance of childhood without arousing an appetite for merely sensational literature. Geography and history texts make little appeal to the child. The only form in which such reading is palatable is in books like 'The Seven Little Sisters,' etc. For books of humour we would suggest the works of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear, and such poems as 'John Gilpin' and 'The Pied Piper.' The idea is that the child shall pass from the simple oral reproduction of the stories he has heard his teacher read to thinking and talking and dreaming about the contents of the books and poems which he peruses. It is a mistake to explain the exact meaning of each word and sentence as it occurs, as this distracts the

child's attention from the general sense. The reading-matter, if suitably chosen, will give the child enjoyment; and where explanations are needful, they should be suggested rather than laboured.

In these days of marvellous book-production a sufficiency of books can be obtained with the capitation allowances made by most education committees. A double supply of books may be secured by the head teachers of girls' and boys' departments arranging to exchange readers. Books may also be interchanged between classes in the same department. If a book is worth reading at all, it is worth re-reading—after a reasonable interval. A first reading does not exhaust the interest or the possibilities of a book.

The amount of reading matter that a junior class can easily master in a year is suggested by the following list of books which have been used with excellent results in a large boys' school :

Standard I.—Two class readers ; three continuous readers, comprising ' Sindbad the Sailor ' (Collins), ' Tales for Children ' and ' Little Wanderlin ' (Macmillan's Children's Classics) ; a geography reader, ' The World and its People ' (Nisbet) ; a book of history stories ; and a poetry reader.

Standard II.—Two class readers ; five continuous readers comprising ' Louey Chisholm's Fairy-book ' (Jack), ' Mrs. Newt's Adventures ' (Nisbet), ' Popular Norse Tales ' (Collins), ' Scenes from Fairyland ' (Children's Classics), ' Four Winds Farm ' (Children's

Classics); a poetry reader; a geography story reader; and a book of stories from history.

* *Standard III.*—Two class readers; six continuous readers comprising ‘Waterbabies’ (Told to the Children, Jack), ‘Coral Island’ (Collins), ‘Norse Legends’ (Collins), ‘Alice in Wonderland,’ ‘Sasha the Serf’ (Blackie), ‘King of the Elms’ (Nisbet); two books of poetry; a book of geography stories; and a book of history stories.

Suggestions for Reading Practice.

The reading exercises suitable for junior classes fall naturally under four headings: (1) Reading aloud by the teacher, (2) Class-reading, (3) Silent reading of narrative, (4) Poetry reading.

(1) *Reading aloud by the Teacher.* This is a class lesson that would be taken at least once a week. The teacher reads a story or an extract from a book to the children that is slightly in advance of the general reading matter used by the class. This regular literature lesson is regarded by the children in the schools where it is practised as a periodical treat. The selection of the reading is usually suggested by some portion of the work of the previous week, or the teacher consults his own preferences and selects an extract or story which he feels will make direct appeal to his scholars. Simple books of travel or of the lives of the various figures in history or exploration will supply matter of general interest bearing on geography and history; the subjects of the nature-stories selected will be suggested by the

lessons taken recently ; and for freer selection we should suggest such books as, Kipling's 'Just-so Stories,' the 'Jungle-book,' or Charlotte Yonge's 'Book of Golden Deeds.'

The teacher will read slowly and with due emphasis, taking care not to exaggerate the expression or to labour words. Where he thinks the matter or the style of the author is too difficult for his hearers, he will substitute sparingly. The length of the extract should be regulated by the time allowed for the lesson in such a way that a few minutes at the conclusion of the reading may be devoted to discussion of the extract. This discussion, which is possibly more valuable as an intellectual exercise than the reading itself, will consist partly of questions put by the teacher and partly of answers to the questions that the children propound, and from time to time children who can do so should be called upon to reply to the questions or comments of the other pupils.

(2) *Lesson from a Class-reader.* The first few minutes of the lesson will be devoted to word-drill, during which the words likely to present difficulties of recognition or meaning will be prepared with the whole class, the teacher printing them on the black-board.

The class will then be broken up into from four to six sections, each in charge of a pupil, and the children will read the lesson quietly in turn, the teacher going from group to group either to listen or to question, or else taking the most backward section.

The sectional method is very practicable from Standard I. upwards, and is attended with excellent results, except of course when the teacher is lacking in power of command and the order is lax. The principal feature of the method is that the children obtain so much more practice in individual reading than with the ordinary class organisation, and because of this do not fall into the habit of idling whilst awaiting their turn to read. The sections are organised with a special view to the reading ability of each scholar, and promotion from one section to the next will be the reward of progress. The head child of each section will take charge till promoted to the next, or the four or five best readers in the class may be placed in charge of each section, though the latter arrangement is possibly a little unfair to these children. Except for the occasional promotions to which we have referred, the composition of the various sections will not be altered frequently.

The children will be encouraged to read aloud with due expression, and each section will be trained to look through a paragraph before it is read, so that the meaning is grasped before a child reads it. This procedure makes insistence upon mechanical rules unnecessary, as the required expression will be suggested by the meaning, and there will be no occasion for such behests as "raise the voice at a comma" or "drop the voice at a full-stop." When the teacher goes from one group to another he will not follow the reading from the book, or such faults

as mumbling or slurring of words will very probably pass unnoticed by him. }

The third section of the lesson—the last five minutes—will be given to oral questioning of the whole class on the subject of the lesson, and one child from each section should be called upon to give a portion of the oral summary of the matter read. The first and last exercises in the lesson will not together take up more than ten minutes of the whole time of the reading lesson.

(3) *Silent Reading of Narrative ; Method of Handling.* This is a lesson for which continuous readers are used. When the sectional method of organisation is adopted, it gives opportunity for the introduction of several books at the same total cost as if one set were obtained for the whole class. For the various sections may each be reading from as many different books.

The whole of this lesson may be spent in silent reading ; and the amount of matter covered will be regulated by the teacher in proportion to the progress of each section. On some days the teacher will take the opportunity to coach the more backward sections. On other occasions he will go from group to group and question the children upon the substance of the silent reading they are doing, or upon the portion read silently at their previous lesson. This plan for silent reading, in the words of the ' Suggestions ' dated July 1912, " makes considerable demands upon the skill and resource of the teacher, for she must possess not merely the

ability to ascertain by judicious questions where help can be given, but also the power (which is an infallible sign of the real teacher) of perceiving, as it were instinctively, when a child is working and when he is merely idling with his eyes fixed upon the book." To guard against the latter fault, the children should be required occasionally, even in the lowest classes, to write or to tell as a composition the answers to short questions upon the characters or incidents occurring in the passage they have been reading. By this means the teacher will also see how far the method pursued is a success.

(4) *Poetry Reading.* This will take the form of a class lesson, as the sectional method is not advantageous in this case. The difficult words of the selected poem will be prepared, and sentences containing them made by a few of the children. This ensures that their meanings are clearly understood, and obviates the necessity for breaking up the sense of the poem by explanations. After the children have read the poem through twice individually, the teacher will read it as a pattern, with due regard to expression and meaning. Then he will require the children to give the substance of the poem in their own words, or to express their ideas upon its meaning.

Note.—The idea of a sectional organisation for reading naturally suggests a method which will be more fully developed later in the school course. The advanced section will exhaust the matter of the ordinary continuous readers supplied, before the remainder of the class. When these children

have done so, they may be given each a separate book to read by themselves. The books will constitute a 'class-library' of perhaps ten or a dozen volumes, which the advanced section will read for their own enjoyment without being separately tested, at least during the reading lesson. They can always be asked to give the gist of what they have read in a short written composition, or be required to give an oral summary to the class.

CHAPTER VII.

SUITABLE TREATMENT OF POEMS AND SONGS.

“WHAT we like determines what we *are*, and is the sign of what we are; and to teach taste is inevitably to form character.”—JOHN RUSKIN.

The Aim and Purpose of the Study of Poetry.

“Side by side with the reading and learning of English prose should go the reading and learning of English poetry—an exercise which has always been regarded as perhaps the most potent means of awakening a love for the beautiful in thought and language.”¹ Another use of the study of poetry in Elementary Schools is the cultivation of the emotions, and the remarks on the choice of poetry in the ‘Memorandum on the Teaching of English in Scottish Primary Schools,’ with reference to this aim, are well worthy of quotation: “Poetry selected for children must arouse no unworthy emotion; nor such potent emotions as terror, or even pity, to an overwhelming degree; nor can it properly appeal to instincts which have not yet

¹ ‘Suggestions for the Teaching of English,’ July 1912.

arisen. . . . There remains a group of pleasurable or expansive emotions proper to childhood, and ranging from mere glee and frolic and mere delight in pretty things, through sympathy, love and admiration on the one hand, and through joy in natural beauty and wonder on the other, to such deep sentiments as reverence and awe. Viewed in this light, poetry in schools may become a powerful ally to morals by broadening and deepening the emotional nature, and so enriching the soil of the virtues."

The appeal of poetry to the imagination and understanding is especially strong in the child, and it should be our aim to strengthen this even more through the medium of suitable poems and ballads. Just as we have noted that jingles, nonsensical and otherwise, are always delightful to little children, so are songs and poems, by reason of their rhythm and musical qualities, a constant source of pleasure to children of all ages. It is this pleasure in *form* as well as in meaning which makes the study of poetry so valuable in childhood. When memory is more retentive than at any other age, the teacher is able to see that the child's education provides him with a storehouse of beautiful thoughts which will gladden his life in after years, and help to develop his appreciation of all that is good and lovely, whether his days be passed in the city or in the fields. If this means of beautifying life and work is to be utilised to the utmost, the teacher must see to it that the poetry read and learned in childhood is of the best.

Whilst the mental development of infants will permit of little more than the learning of simple nursery rhymes and songs of nature, the junior classes may pass on to poetry of a wider field. The selection of simple ballads is always popular with children for two reasons. The vigorous rhythm and easy metre please them, and the matter is in the form of incident or narrative—both important considerations. Poetry, other than songs or ballads, may seldom be more ambitious than nature verses, or poems within the scope of a child's experience or understanding. Teachers have been frequently misled in the past by the mere verbal simplicity of certain poems which treat of the deeper questions of human life, and are far removed from the comprehension of children at this stage. A good example is Wordsworth's 'We are Seven,' the basic idea of which is, or should be, quite beyond any normal child. A child's thoughts should be concerned with the joy of living, not with morbid imaginings. Certain poems that are only partially understood by the child may be taught, with the intention that the memory of them will last to more mature years, when appreciation of their meaning may be the source of strength and inspiration—but they are emphatically not of the 'We are Seven' type.

There is no reason why a long poem, or extracts from a long poem like 'Hiawatha,' should not be selected for study in the junior classes. The portions dealing with nature, and the experiences of the central figure and his friends—of Hiawatha's child-

hood, the making of his canoe, his fishing, and his travels—are very suitable for reading by children of nine and ten, and many beautiful passages are sufficiently simple for memorising. The treatment of the allegory of the coming of Mondamin and the planting of the maize naturally will be postponed until a later period, when the story of how Hiawatha cleared the Indians' rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and taught them the arts of peace, can be fully understood. This idea of a preliminary reading of portions of the longer poems, preparatory to a fuller study later, comes within the aim and purpose of poetry-instruction for the juniors. It helps to preserve a sequence of growth and development in both form and subject that is of the greatest importance in a continuous course of education.

Broadly then, the poetry of the junior section will be selected and treated with a view to the present pleasure to be derived from it, combined with some definite idea of progress towards a deeper appreciation of such study, and with a view to the possibilities of emotional poetry as a means of cultivating taste and character. The greater part of the poetry will be studied in the form of reading, and the method of memorising extracts will also be by reading, either on the part of the teacher or the child.

Exercises in Poetry.

(a) *Infants*. The exercises here will be simple rhymes, childish poems, the words of simple songs, and dramatic games. So far as practicable the

dramatic method will be employed with all of these. Exercises preliminary to the work of the junior classes will be the telling in simple prose by the teacher of the matter of some of the poems which will be studied later. In all lessons (whether singing or reciting) the correct enunciation of the words will receive attention, and emphasis should be taught without exaggeration. The upper class at least in the infants' section should read more poetry than they learn, though as much verse should actually be committed to memory as the progress of the class allows. Songs of the type in 'Children's Songs,' C. Reinecke (Augener), are eminently suited to little ones though they are not in general use, and the English words are excellent. 'Who has the Whitest Lambkins?' is a good example of these poetical songs. We append to this chapter a list of books of songs and poetry.

Some very suitable exercises are included in the following: 'Sing a Song of Sixpence,' 'Tom he was a Piper's Son,' 'Wee Willie Winkie,' 'Rock-a-bye Baby,' 'Little Boy Blue,' and other rhymes of similar character, 'Bed-time' (Hood), 'My Shadow,' 'My Bed is a Boat,' 'The Lamp-lighter,' 'The Land of Counterpane' (Stevenson), 'The Merry Mice,' 'The North Wind,' 'Laughing Song' (Blake), 'George and the Chimney Sweep,' 'Welcome, Little Robin,' 'The Months' (Sara Coleridge), 'Dirty Jim,' 'A Little Cock-Sparrow,' 'How doth the little busy bee' (Watts), 'The Lost Playmate' (A. F. Brown), 'I'm a Merry Merry Squirrel' (M'Leod),

'The Story of Augustus who would not have any Soup' (H. Hoffman), 'Wynken, Blynken, and Nod,' 'Good-night' (Jane Taylor).

(b) *Juniors*. Amongst the poetical exercises for this section a liberal amount of reading should be included. Whether or not it has been found practicable to supply the upper infants' class with a poetry reader, one is certainly needed for each class in the junior section. The old method of the whole class learning the same 'pieces' was a process which frequently resulted in destroying all love for poetry. When it is remembered that the verses were learned simultaneously, and that every child recited the words in class till repetition made them stale and uninteresting to teacher and children, the result cannot be wondered at. As soon as poetry is learned through reading, it becomes practicable to introduce the greatest variety in the pieces selected for memorising; and as children soon learn to study silently much time is saved. Reading poetry aloud, also, is a great help to expression, for the correct phrasing and emphasis are suggested by the form and rhythm of the verses.

The songs and poetry selected for juniors, with the exception of simple lyrical poems descriptive of nature and the world as seen through children's eyes, will consist chiefly of narrative and dramatic verse. The study of purely imaginative poetry is left to a later stage. Among the examples given, it will be noticed that several humorous poems have been included. There is a tendency to make the

work of the school as serious in manner as it is in intention, and it is sometimes forgotten that the sense of humour requires cultivation.

Poems suitable for memorising: 'The Fairies' (Allingham), 'Miller of the Dee,' 'The Village Blacksmith,' 'The Windmill' (Longfellow), 'Night with a Wolf' (Bayard Taylor), 'The Coming of Spring' (Mary Howitt), 'Snowdrops' (Alma-Tadema), 'The Lost Doll' (Kingsley), 'My Kingdom' (Stevenson), 'The Spider and the Fly,' 'Home for the Holidays,' 'The Wind in a Frolic' (W. Howitt), 'The Fairies of the Caldor Low' (Mary Howitt), 'Llewellyn and his Dog' (E. Spenser), 'Lady Moon' (Houghton), 'The Inchcape Rock' (Southey), 'The Wreck of the Hesperus,' 'The Children's Hour' (Longfellow), 'The Soldier's Dream' (Campbell), 'A Wish' (S. Rogers), 'The Camel's Hump' (Kipling), 'Little Billee' (Thackeray), 'The Lobster Quadrille' (Carroll), extracts from 'Harold and Alice, or the reformed Giant' (Rands), 'Harriet and the Matches' (H. Hoffman), 'The Jumbies' (Lear), 'The Wreck of the Steamship "Puffin"' (F. Anstey).

Poems suitable for reading: (extracts to be learned); 'John Gilpin' (Cowper), 'Horatius' (Macaulay), 'Robin Hood Ballads' (Anon.), 'Hiawatha' (Longfellow), 'Chevy Chase' (Anon.), 'The Pied Piper' (Browning), 'The Building of the Ship' (Longfellow), 'The Building of San Sophia' (Baring-Gould).

We quote one more remark from the 'suggestions'

with reference to the selection of poetry : “ So long as the poetry chosen for repetition is good in itself, and has a fascination for the children, it is of little moment whether or no they wholly comprehend what they learn. Indeed an element of incomprehensibility is perhaps part of the fascination. . . . The pieces must of course have a meaning for them, but not necessarily their full meaning.”

Practical Treatment.

In the study of poetry it should be remembered that treatment is as important as the choice of a subject. The use of poetry books is not intended to supersede oral treatment, for the reading of poetry aloud should always form a stage in its preparation. The greatest benefit of a supply of books is that the wearisome and uninteresting method of repetition is avoided. With junior classes, when reading or learning a poem, there should always be an effort made to discuss the meaning, though any definite attempt to discuss form or to cultivate taste and judgment by comparison with another poem must needs wait. The last is probably too intellectual an exercise, and demands more grasp than is usually discovered in children of this age, although it is remarkable what an enthusiastic teacher can do.

(a) *Suggested Methods with Infants.* (i) *Words of Songs* : ‘ Who has the Whitest Lambkins ? ’—two verses of the English version. For second or first class infants.

1. " *Who has the whitest lambkins ?*
2. *Look up into the sky !*
3. *It is the moon, the darling,*
4. *Whose home is up on high.*
5. *She rises in the evening,*
6. *When all else fain would sleep ;*
7. *Comes from her little cottage,*
8. *And calls her little sheep.*

*" She calls them out to pasture
 Upon her meadows gay ;
 The stars are her white lambkins,
 And never seen by day.
 Like sister and like brother
 Are all the stars on high,
 They dearly love each other,
 And neither fight nor cry."*

This beautiful piece of simple imagery appeals very strongly to the child. It has the note of 'make-believe,' in which it is pretended the moon and stars are the mother-sheep and her lambs. The treatment may require several lessons, as indicated, and may logically follow a nature lesson on the sheep and lambs.

First Step. Nature lesson on the sheep and lamb. Mother-love in animals compared with mother-love in human beings. Reference to the fact that the sheep and lambs are kept in the meadow all through the night.

Second Step. Conversation lesson on the subject of the words. This will take the form of a black-board lesson, the teacher using coloured chalks. A rough drawing of sheep and lambs in a meadow will be made. What happens when evening comes ?

It grows dark. What lamp shines in the sky ? The moon. What do we call the other lights which twinkle ? The stars. Teacher draws the moon and stars on the blackboard, and institutes a comparison between them and the mother-sheep and her lambs. The teacher asks " Who has the whitest lambkins ? " and tells children to look into the dark sky for the answer. The answer is the moon " whose home is up on high." When does the moon rise ? In the evening. What are the sheep and other animals doing at that time ? They want to sleep, *i.e.* they " fain would sleep." Then the moon comes from her little cottage—represent this by a cloud added to the drawing—and calls her little sheep. The children will now have an idea of the sequence of the first verse. A child asks line 1, a second child responds with line 2, a third repeats lines 3 and 4, and two other children repeat lines 5 and 6, and 7 and 8, in turn. As they are required to *tell* the lines to the class, the natural expression will be given them. Treat the second verse in the same way. Individual repetition will result in the verses being very quickly learned.

Third Step. Arrange a series of questions to elicit the various parts of the poem *in their right sequence*. This will help to impress the words upon the children's memories. Revise the words during the lesson.

Fourth Step. Free-arm or crayon drawing of the sheep and lambs in the meadow, with the moon and stars above.

Fifth Step. The children learn the tune of the song and sing the words.

• (ii) *Poem*. ‘*My Shadow*’—*Stevenson*—First class infants.

First Step. Conversation on shadows. Choose a sunny day when shadows are thrown. Establish that the shadows are longest in the morning and evening when the sun is low, and shortest at twelve o’clock. Measure the shadow of a child at different times in the day. This may be done in the playground at nine, twelve, and four. Take a black-board into the playground and get one child to outline another child’s shadow upon brown paper pinned to it. Elicit that there are no shadows seen upon a dull day. Make some pleasant fun out of the fact that the shadow always stays with one, if the sun is shining, and that you cannot catch it or jump over it. Tell children to notice their shadows on the wall when they go to bed, and ask them about it next day.

Second Step. Repeat the words of the poem slowly, verse by verse, and discuss each verse in turn. Then the sequence of ideas will be learned in their proper order.

“*I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very like me from the heels up to the head,
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into
my bed.*”

“*The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow,
Not at all like proper children, which is always very
slow ;*”

*For he sometimes shoots up taller like an indiarubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all!*¹

*"He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in ev'ry sort of way.*

*He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!*

*"One morning very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on ev'ry butter-cup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed."*

Third Step. Committing the verses to memory. In a poem of this brevity there is no need to learn it a verse at a time; the method would destroy interest, and spoil the conception of the whole thing. After it has been re-read slowly twice by the teacher, the children should be asked to supply a line, or a portion of a line each. If they have been really interested, they will be able to do this so far as sequence and sense are concerned, though there will be several verbal slips. Correct the latter as briefly as possible, and then repeat the exercise with different children. The expression they put into the words will help—so will the metre—and the rhymes suggest the second line of each couplet. In a short time the poem will be known, especially if the children are

¹ This may be shown in the playground by sloping the black-board, on which is caught the shadow of the child.

encouraged to listen attentively to the recitation by the knowledge that they may be called upon at any moment to go on.

(b) *Suggested Methods for Junior Classes.* With the first standard, until the last term of the school year, the children may learn the same piece. Then various pieces may be learned from books by different children. These will have been read and re-read until their meaning is clearly understood.

The best method of teaching the same poem to the whole class is to chat about it at first, taking care to follow the sequence of ideas as faithfully as possible and incidentally making use of any forms of speech likely to present difficulty. Then read the poem slowly through twice. If the children have books, let them also read the verses through individually and aloud. Then commence to have each verse in turn recited by separate children after it has been read through. If a child cannot go on, the others are encouraged to supply the omission. There will, of course, be plenty of verbal errors, transposition and substitution of words, etc., but these will disappear with mutual correction, and the correct expression will not be spoiled by resorting to simultaneous repetition.

For Standards II. and III. the class may be divided into from four to six sections and a different poem selected for each. Read the poem that each section is going to learn from the poetry books, and see that the meaning is well grasped. The children will then learn the pieces by reading and re-reading

them slowly. They should from the first be encouraged to cover up the next line to that they are reading, and to try if they can remember it correctly, without reference to the book, before going on. By this means they will begin to remember at once, and learn the poem in half the time which repeated reading would necessitate. Four to six sections each learning a different set of verses are as many as one teacher can hope to handle successfully at the same time; though, when it comes to testing, a child can hear the recitation in each section, just as was suggested in the sectional reading lesson. The teacher will go from group to group, correcting emphasis and expression, and encouraging the weaker children. The sectional method, though noisy, seldom becomes disorderly, because the children are each called upon to do something frequently.

In the course of the lesson a child in each section should always be required to give his own rendering of the poem in a few simple words.

Suggestion for Acted Poetry.

Some years since, we recollect seeing a number of Norwegian children of about seven or eight singing an action-song in the gymnasium of their school. It was all about iron—how the ore has to be dug; how it is smelted in the fire; and how it has to be hammered and worked. The ethical centre of the song was, that people as well as iron are made strong and useful through work. When the song was finished, the class recited the words singly, whilst

the rest repeated the actions they had been performing in illustration of the meaning. In England it has been decided that singing, accompanied by vigorous movement, is undesirable; but there is little doubt that the device of actions for the class whilst individual children recite, is an excellent notion. All the children are actively employed: the consideration they have to give to the meaning and the actions which illustrate it causes them to follow the words intelligently; and interest and variety are given to the whole exercise. A good many infants' teachers make occasional use of the device: it is at least worth trial with juniors who are becoming a little impatient of waiting their turn to recite.

A List of Books containing suitable Poems and Songs for Infants and Juniors.

'A Child's Garden of Verse' (R. L. Stevenson), 'Recitations for the Infant School' (M. Riach), 'Recitations for the Juniors' (M. Riach), 'A Book of Nature Poetry' (W. Claxton), 'The Hiawatha Primer,' in simple prose with occasional extracts from the poem (Harrap), 'Songs of Nature and of Home' (M. Cameron), 'Recitations for Infants' (Anne Pickering), 'Recitations, Rhymes, and Dialogues' (Emily Warmington), 'A Year in the Infant School' (Mabel Bloomer), 'Months and Melodies' (B. Hawkins), 'Book of Song Games and Ball Games' (Kate Bremner), 'The Twins' Tune Book' (A. Somervell), 'Children's Songs' (C. Reinecke), 'Poetry Book' (Nisbet), 'Children's Garland from

the best Poetry ' (Coventry Patmore), ' A Treasury of Verse for School and Home ' (Harrap), ' The Golden Staircase ' (Jack), ' The Globe Poetry Book ' (Macmillan), ' A Cycle of Song ' (Nelson), ' Little Books of Verse ' (Frowde), ' Song Garden for Children ' (Ed. Arnold).

CHAPTER VIII.

ORAL COMPOSITION FOR INFANTS.

General Aims.

The chief end in view in the conversation lessons of Chapter III. was to secure freedom of speech in order that the children in their endeavours to express themselves should not be hampered by shyness or want of constant practice. The purpose of subsequent composition exercises in the infants' school is somewhat wider in scope. In addition to training the individual child in the power of speech, attention now will be more definitely directed to increasing vocabulary and expressing thought with accuracy and precision. This result will not be possible unless the children are capable of forming definite ideas about things in general. It is necessary that they should think—within the limits of their capacity and understanding—before they attempt to express what they think. For this reason, the subjects for oral composition must not be in advance of the child's comprehension.

The great advantage of oral exercises over written ones is that more ideas can be expressed orally than

could be set down in the same time. This is especially the case, of course, when children have little or no power of expressing themselves otherwise than by speaking or drawing. But the teacher of a large class finds it hard to give each individual child sufficient practice in speech. This is a need demanding her utmost care and skill. The best means of avoiding a waste of precious time is by seeing that interest in the subject of the lesson is secured. It is possible for quite twenty children to be given opportunity for free speech in a twenty-minute lesson, and, if the remainder of the class are really interested, the benefit to those who do not express themselves aloud is almost as great as if they did. For they follow each child's attempt with intelligent attention. Where, however, the power and skill of the teacher is not equal to the task of sustaining the attention of all throughout the lesson, the inevitable result is that the only valuable work done by any individual child is at the moment when it is called upon to tell the others something.

At this point, the children above the babies' class will be encouraged to speak at greater length than was the case formerly. Fewer questions will be necessary to assist the progress of the composition; and a child will never be limited to a single sentence if it can continue. 'And' and 'then' will still be the natural links between sentences, and nothing material will be gained by an attempt to discard them or to substitute other words for them. As far

as possible, the correction which the teacher thinks needed will be brief and concise. Over-insistence on correction of grammatical and verbal mistakes ends merely in discouraging free speech ; and it should be remembered that neither *connected* nor *continuous* speech can be looked for at this stage.

The teacher constantly finds herself baffled in the oral exercises by unexpected points of view that the children discover. If she is wise she will not aim specially at directing the composition into particular channels, but will, within reason, allow the children to follow out their own ideas. Their ideas may strike her as trivial, but they will be interesting to the children ; whilst her own ideas may appear to them not nearly so interesting. There is no readier means of discouraging free thought than to take the subject of discussion out of range of the child's mind. At the same time, children seldom *will* say or think just what is desired or expected. The case of the little boy who saw the lions at Trafalgar Square for the first time, and who, after eyeing them gravely, asked, " Don't they *know* it's rude to put their tongues out ? " is only an example of what the teacher will be constantly meeting. Still even if the child's point of view does seem ludicrous and trivial, one should always reflect before trying to establish another, because the teacher's point of view may not be half as interesting to it, and not nearly so educative.

Subjects for Infants.

The subjects selected as the basis of oral exercises will be similar to those found suitable for conversation lessons for the babies. It is essential that the child should have a goodly number of ideas about any subject before he begins to express himself concerning it. Consequently, the best subjects are those which are simple and concrete. Suitable subjects may be classified conveniently as, (i) those which exercise the faculty of observation, and, (ii) those which appeal to the imagination. The exercises to stimulate imagination are harder than the others, because the subjects are not concrete; it is consequently very desirable that they fulfil the other requirement—simplicity.

(i) *Exercises assisted by Observation.* These include common sights seen by the children, such as, a bicycle, a motor-car, a flock of sheep, a blacksmith's forge, the passing of a number of soldiers, a band, the waking flowers, a rainy day, the street, a corn-field, the falling leaves, a snow-storm, a frosty morning, etc. Another set of exercises may be based upon persons known to the children, as father, mother, brother, sister, the baby, teacher, the postman, the doctor, the policeman, a sailor, soldier, carpenter, smith, etc. A third set of themes are to be found in the common experiences of children—going to bed, waking up in the morning, washing the hands and face, dressing, bathing, coming to school, setting the table, tidying a room, mother's

cooking, etc. Discussions about animals with which the children are familiar, the weather, the seasons, the plants and flowers of the nature lessons, and so forth, are also exercises which call for expression of ideas which have been awakened by observation. Still further observation lessons may be planned, in the course of which pictures are described. This type of lesson, however, naturally leads to little imaginative talks in the form of discussions of the names of children, dogs, etc., seen in the picture, what they have been doing, what they are about to do, and so on.

(ii) *Imaginative Exercises.* These are supplied by the stories or narrative poems that the teacher first carefully tells or reads, and the substance of which the children recount later. Such lessons may be selected from fables, legends, fairy-tales, myths, simple allegories and nature parables, and stories from history. From their form and matter, Bible-stories provide excellent subjects, *e.g.* the story of Joseph and his brethren. Stories which are narrated will consist mainly of brief episodes. Later on, the children may be encouraged to invent little episodes for themselves about a given subject, or to make up variations of a story with which they are familiar. Generally speaking, the subjects selected will be suggested by the schemes in use for the school.

Outlined Suggestions for Various Methods of Handling Oral Composition.

To secure interest the greatest variety of subject and treatment is desirable.

(i) *Composition on a given subject* chosen from among the exercises assisted by the faculty of observation. In this, the children will construct piece-meal a connected composition, of which various scholars contribute a portion. The matter of each contribution may be selected by the teacher, or the scholar may follow on where the previous one has left off. The first part of the lesson, thus, will approximate to the method already discussed for the conversation lessons. The children will be encouraged to ask questions of one another, and to talk about the answers. In the second part of the lesson the children give short oral summaries of the connected composition. The method is developed in the specimen lesson on the policeman.

(ii) *Composition about subjects already dealt with dramatically.* The teacher calls upon children to describe in turn some portion of a previous lesson, or to give a brief summary of what they remember. Selected children come out to the front of the class to tell their classmates what they can. The form of the dramatised lesson has been indicated in the section on conversation lessons ; the intention here is that the children should be exercised in what they have observed and remembered.

(iii) Instead of building up a fairly long com-

position on a subject, as in (i), several children may make up, in turn, *simple complete accounts* of the observational subject. Each of these should be made as different from the previous attempt as possible: a difficult exercise, as children find it easier to imitate than to take a new point of view.

(iv) *Description of Pictures.* Each child is given a different picture post-card. They are told to make up something about it, and to draw what they invent on paper with crayon. The first half of the lesson is spent in getting children *in pairs* to tell each other about their pictures, whilst the rest of the class is occupied in drawing. The children will be encouraged to ask each other questions. During the second part of the time, the remainder of the children are called out in twos, bringing their picture post-cards and their drawings. Each can then describe to the other what the pictures mean, and what they have tried to represent in their drawings. If the class are more interested in what is taking place in front than in their own work, they need not be made to continue their own exercises, but may listen.

(v) *Oral Composition on the Teacher's Reading, or other Lessons.* This differs from the purely conversational lesson in that various children are required to give a short summary of some portion of the lesson. Such summaries will be told orally to the rest of the class. They will not be elicited by a series of questions, and will be mainly what has appealed especially to each child. No particular

sequence of ideas or continuity of form can be looked for in this exercise : the freer the child's attempt the better.

(vi) *The Oral Reproduction of a Story narrated by the Teacher.* The value of the teacher's narration lies chiefly in the extension of the child's vocabulary by the introduction of new words explained by their context. The teacher tells the story once, slowly and emphatically. As she proceeds she may illustrate the story rapidly on the blackboard or brown paper. The drawings will assist the children to reproduce the sequence of the story as well as the matter. As far as possible the children relate the episode in the words used by the teacher : those who are listening will be most eager to correct any departure from the original narrative. There is no need to select new stories for this exercise, for children dearly like an old story. Very short anecdotes of the type in 'True Tales for my Children,' J. B. Marshall (E. J. Arnold), are also useful, as they are shorter than many fables and fairy-tales ; and more than one story can be dealt with in a lesson.

(vii) *Original Stories.* A method of handling this exercise is indicated below in the lesson on the Autobiography of a Dog. Instead of inventing an original story, children may be encouraged to relate familiar stories and anecdotes, with their own embellishments, or introducing original episodes. Even if the child goes hopelessly wrong in attempting to maintain some connectedness of narrative and sequence of ideas, there should be no interrup-

tions for corrections and suggestions until the child has finished its attempt.

•(viii) *Oral Composition preparatory to Written Exercises.* A composition on a subject is constructed sentence by sentence, and written on the blackboard. Such an exercise may be read carefully, and then transcribed by the first class infants, and by the lowest class in the juniors. The exercise is only of value if occasionally used, and is open to the objection that the children are not encouraged to develop their ideas freely. It serves, however, to point the connection between speaking and writing.

Note.—If the oral composition is to have the utmost educative value, the teacher will take care that the children are set a good example in her own speech. She will always endeavour to speak simply, accurately, and distinctly. She will avoid the colloquial use of words, and all vulgarisms, and watch herself to see that what she says is always expressed in proper sequence, and with due attention to relevancy.

The two lessons presented in detail below are the results of actual experiment; and are given to suggest the kind of thing that is evolved when exercises in oral composition are set.

I. ORAL COMPOSITION LESSON : OBSERVATIONAL SUBJECT, "THE POLICEMAN": First Class Infants.

Part I. A general description of the policeman was volunteered, about twenty children contributing

ideas. This was largely in the form of disconnected impressions, and serves to show what children notice. The teacher drew a rough coloured representation of the subject as he was described, as well as of the various articles he was credited with having about him. The children had never seen a truncheon, which was evidently a thing of mysterious interest to them. An inevitable want of connectedness of ideas is observable in the first part of the lesson.

Volunteered Statements.—‘The policeman has a blue coat and trousers, and a belt’—‘It is called a uniform’—‘This kind has no waistcoat’—‘He has round silver buttons on his coat’—‘The Head Policeman has three white stripes on his arm’—‘The policeman has some letters on his hat, and a number on his collar’—‘He has a whistle on a chain’—‘If he wants any more policemen he blows it’—‘The policeman has a lamp’—‘He carries it on his belt, at the back’—‘He has his macintosh on his belt’—‘The strap on his left arm is to tell you he is on duty’—‘It is blue and white’—‘In his back pocket, where you cannot see, he has got a revolver.’

This statement was contradicted, thus : ‘No—he has a blue *cruncheon*.’ Someone else supplied ‘truncheon,’ but no one knew exactly what it was like. One child described it as a ‘loaded stick.’ ‘He has a hand-cuff in his pocket, too’—‘And a book in his back-pocket for names.’

Part II. As there were no more voluntary statements forthcoming, the following information was elicited ; and the teacher did no further drawing.

‘The policemen go along the street in a row’—‘The Head Policeman goes by the side, and he leaves one at

every little place of the street '—' The place where the policeman watches is called his beat '—' He spends his time on duty in walking about '—' He catches naughty boys '—' He looks for thieves '—' He catches burglars and men who get drunk ' The rest of the facts, relating to less exciting things, were elicited more slowly. ' He stops all the motors and carts when people want to cross the road '—' He finds lost children, and takes and feeds them '—' He tells people the time '—' Sometimes he tells people where they want to go '—' When there's a bash-up, or something, he stops the drivers from going on '—' He looks after people that get run over, and then he takes them to the hospital '—' He is watching in the night in the streets '—' Sometimes they shine their lamps on houses, in case the doors are open, or the windows, or if burglars have got in '—' Then he blows his whistle.' The general conclusion elicited was that : ' His work is to stop people getting run over, and to keep guard over houses and shops.'

Part III. The class was given a minute to think, and then several children were called out to say what they could on the subject, in the form of a connected composition. When one child left off, another continued. This is indicated by the numbers given below with the result of the exercise. Some of the children told of personal experiences.

Result. (1) ' The policeman has a stiff coat and trousers.' (2) ' He has a star on his hat. And some stripes, and a belt, and a chain and whistle. And in the pocket in his trousers at the back is where he puts people's names in a book.' (3) ' A policeman has to look out for anyone not getting run over, and keep burglars from getting in houses. All the night sometimes, he shines his lamp on houses, and looks to see if

there is anyone getting in the doors and windows. One night when my mother was just going to bed and all the lights were out, there was a candle burning. And my mother was holding it in her hand to put it somewhere. And a policeman knocked at the door. And my mother came down and opened the door. And the policeman spoke to her, and found it was all right.' (4) 'Police-men stop motors and carts to see if they have got their licences.' (5) 'If the motors are making too much noise or smoke, the policeman stops it.' (6) 'One evening after tea, a policeman came to my door, and asked if it was my father who rode a motor bike too fast.' (7) 'When I was in the street, I see a motor-car knock into a tram. It was on the wrong side of the road. And the motor-car hit the part of the tram where the wood sticks out. And the wheel went off with a bang. The policeman came, and the motor had to go home in a cart.'

II. ORAL COMPOSITION LESSON : IMAGINATIVE SUBJECT, "STORY OF A DOG." First Class Infants.

The children were told to think about this the previous day. As an exercise in autobiography, it is noteworthy that not one child forgot that he or she was a 'dog,' and there were thus no mistakes in person. The children came in front in turn, and twelve made an attempt to narrate a story. Selections are given from these, to indicate the results and the difficulties met.

'I am a house dog. I have been living with my master for nearly three years. I have got a kennel in the yard. My master feeds me twice a day. When my master comes in the yard I go indoors after him.'

'So my master turned me out into the street one night. I saw a robber going into a door.' Here the child interrupted himself, and commenced again: 'No! This was in the day-time. My name is Snapsey. When the coalman came, I bit a lump out of his trousers.' That was evidently the incident of the day. 'When my master turned me out at night, I saw a robber, and I barked. Some policemen came. They took this robber up. He had seven months' hard labour. My master got a thousand pounds for me doing that.'

'My name is Roy. I went out last night, and met one of my friends. And I went across London Bridge. It was in London. And I saw my master walking home from work. And then me and my friend and my master we came home. Then my master said I could go out for a little while longer. And I looked at the boats go by under the bridge. That's all!' (The last was final, and was a customary ending.)

'I am a little dog. My name is Spot. One night my master let me out, and I saw a friend. It was a fox-terrier. I went with him to his house, which was a big farm. We had a trouble to scramble under the gates. We nearly got caught by the farmer who came out to put the chickens in their houses, and nearly caught again when he came to the kennel. I had to hide behind my friend. When he went away we had a nice feed of biscuit. That's all.'

'I am a little dog. My master took me out, and hit me with his whip. And when I went home my master shut me up in the shed.' This was all, so the teacher asked what the dog had been doing wrong. Answer, evidently suggested by a previous attempt: 'I bit a bit out of his trousers.'

'When my master took me out for a walk, I ran away and hid behind a tree. And my master could not find me. At last I saw him near me.' (The inevitable

incident of 'a bit out of his trousers' was cropping up again, so the teacher interrupted the story, and the child varied the incident.) 'And he didn't see me, though I was walking behind him. Then my friend came, and we tickled him—with our paws. And he turned round. And he slashed his whip, and we bobbed away, and he slashed the ground. I don't like my master because he is too angry. When he had slashed the ground, he was angry with us for bobbin' away.'

The resemblance between the attempts shows how children try to copy each other. The difficulty with them is to originate fresh ideas. Probably, the same lesson, taken after an observation lesson on the dog, would have been productive of a greater variety of ideas. As it was, it was much relished by the children, even by those who did not narrate; and it gave considerable practice in unaided composition. It will be noted that the imaginary incidents were absurdly exaggerated: the less astonishing happenings were no doubt based upon actual experiences of the children.

CHAPTER IX.

ORAL COMPOSITION FOR JUNIORS.

Value of Oral Composition at this Stage.

In children of from seven to ten years of age, vocabulary and the power of fluent speech are considerably in advance of ability to write fluently and to spell correctly. The fact that there is no general ability to spell correctly is more or less immaterial, though it certainly leads to a want of confidence when the child attempts to express himself in written language. But the laboriousness of written exercises is the cause of great difficulties to the child. The labour involved in writing down his ideas is so great that he finds it all but impossible to achieve any continuity of composition, and it is practically hopeless to look for any logical sequence of ideas. A further important objection to the practice of insisting on written composition to the almost entire exclusion of oral exercises, lies in the fact that, even with well-prepared lower standards, the quantity of composition that can be written is scanty, on account of the slowness shown by children in committing their ideas to paper. For this and

other reasons—amongst the latter, principally because more ground can be covered, and more practice in expression acquired through the medium of non-written exercises—for the present, it will be more satisfactory to subordinate written composition to oral. On the other hand, written composition will in most cases follow on the oral exercises, for which the latter will be the preparation. These written exercises will gradually increase in length and difficulty from Standard I. to Standard III., though it will be desirable still to utilise various forms of oral composition in the senior classes. A danger to be constantly guarded against, however, is that the scope of the written exercises is often pre-determined by the oral work. If this is not remembered, it will be found that children will not take the trouble to put down original ideas, and will merely memorise the work of other scholars in the oral lessons and reproduce it slavishly.

The intention of oral composition is admirably summed up in the 'Memorandum on the Teaching of English in Scottish Primary Schools': "The practice of continuous oral composition will, as fluency and connectedness increase, become more and more incidental to the lessons in Reading, History, Geography, and Nature Study, until as a substantive exercise it survives principally as a preliminary to written composition."

The chief aim of oral composition in the lower standards is to ensure *connected* and *continuous* speech, which is at the same time, accurate, fluent,

and expressive. We have seen, and we shall see, how difficult it is to secure in oral exercises results that are not made up of detached ideas loosely expressed; and this is even more marked in the written work at this stage. The general aim of oral exercises for the juniors is the subject of some very searching remarks in the 'Suggestions' dated July, 1912: "A child of this age should be expected, in giving an account of anything he has seen, heard, or learnt, to speak for a longer time than is usual in an infants' class. He should be trained to weave his narrative into a more definitely connected whole by the use of subordinate clauses, instead of joining every sentence with 'and'—the construction natural to very young children. If there is a plentiful supply of books, and if oral composition is sedulously practised, this growth of the power of speech will follow, in most cases, as a matter of course, and with but little direct instruction from the teacher." Here we have the facts in a nut-shell—the power to compose correctly is mainly to be acquired from constant reading and summarising of the matter read.

Subjects for Oral Composition.

These will be mainly selected from the same sources as those indicated for infants in the preceding chapter. There will certainly be observational subjects selected from the many common and familiar persons, sights, and things of every-day experience, and from the formal lessons. Imaginative exercises may now be used more frequently.

The substance of stories and narrative poems is a valuable source of oral composition at this stage. Summaries of the geography, history, and nature-study lessons will be orally constructed at the close of each lesson. This is a ready means of recapitulation, and undoubtedly a more beneficial and less tedious exercise than the usual method of a succession of questions and answers, particularly when the children are allowed to make use of the blackboard notes in composing their summaries. The practice of the teacher supplementing the more formal history, geography, and nature-study by reading suitably graded selections bearing on the work, will be doubly effective if the children are made orally to discuss the selections. We recommend for these supplementary readings such books as 'Illustrative History,' by Miss Clara Thompson, and 'With Nature's Children,' by Miss Lilian Gask.

Of course, what is attempted here depends very much upon the qualifications of the class-teacher, and upon the previous educational history of the children. No hard and fast limits for oral composition are practicable; they will vary with every particular school and district. The imaginative exercises, however the condition of the school and staffing may affect their aim and scope, may fairly include the oral construction of fairy-tales and stories (original and reproduced), descriptions of travel in various countries, accounts of the children of other lands and ages, modes of life in various periods of history and different countries, and, if

several copies of a child's periodical, such as the 'Little Paper' (Harmsworth) are taken in, selected articles may be read and made the subject of discussion. The occasional acting of episodes in history, with original dialogues by the children, is a stimulating exercise, though teachers are warned that, unless the details of the episodes are painstakingly presented beforehand, the results will be extremely disappointing, however valuable intellectually the experiment may be.

Some Suggestions for Oral Composition Treatment.

If the subjects have been selected with due regard to the previous mental progress of the children, on the lines of the preceding paragraph, it should be possible to avoid the break in method which so frequently, and so regrettably, occurs when children leave the infants' for the junior classes of the school. In the succeeding chapter an instructive experiment in an imaginative exercise for young children is fully treated, and it is not proposed to discuss it here. With reference to the oral treatment of subjects based upon direct observation, the best results in expression, connectedness, and accuracy are secured when the treatment is confined to those points which the children can observe and remark upon for themselves.

The value of the exercises will be largely discounted if the course of the oral composition be constantly interrupted by the teacher correcting errors of expression and speech as they occur. This

is true of infants' oral exercises—it is doubly so at this stage. The best method for avoiding the difficulty is for the teacher to make rough notes upon the errors observed as the members of the class build up the oral composition, and call attention to them at the close of the lesson. By this means, sequence of thought and matter will not be interrupted by intermittent discussion. When the mistakes in facts, expression, or grammar are dealt with, the most valuable suggestions for their elimination will be from the children themselves.

One great difficulty the teacher finds is in the selection of the children who contribute to the composition. The aim is that those most in need of practice are given opportunity for it. These are just the children who will not volunteer, but content themselves with listening more or less attentively.

Some valuable hints are given in the memorandum for Scottish Schools: "Oral lessons in sentence-construction," are advised, "designed to correct mistakes in the use of words and constructions. . . . The teacher should now begin to make lists of common errors in vocabulary and idiom, and of words and constructions which he wishes the children to master effectively. . . . All mistakes common to oral and written composition should be eradicated orally, though some further correction will always be necessary so long as the difficulties of writing divide the attention." Also, with reference to teaching vocabulary, and giving precision to the verbal expressions which present difficulty to the

child, it is suggested : " An early lesson on a ship, *e.g.* might bring in the correct use of words like 'deck' and 'steer,' and of spatial adverbs and prepositions like 'astern' and 'beyond.' " We quote one more suggestion for large classes : " A large class of fifty or sixty should be organised in sections, one of which is taken at a time for the [oral] lesson in English, the rest being meanwhile employed in silent work, one form of which will be the silent reading already described." In the chapter on 'Reading in the Junior Classes,' we have referred to the way in which this exercise may be taken.

Outlines of some typical Oral Lessons.

(i) *A Geography Lesson with the Sand Tray.*—Standard I.

This follows the geography lesson, in the course of which the teacher and the children constructed the sea-coast, with openings and capes, islands, mountains, rivers, and lakes. In the oral composition lesson several children describe the various parts of the previous lesson, making use of the different terms they have learned. After several have described to the class what they recollect, other children come in front and, whilst describing what happened in the geography lesson, repeat the actual manipulation of the sand as they speak. Where the children fail to find the word or the term they require, they fall back upon the usual primitive devices of practical illustration and gesture, and the

other children supply the verbal explanation. A fair example of an oral composition constructed in the course of this method, is the following :

‘ You made two islands like these, with a narrow strait in between. Then you made a bay, like this—a piece of land with water going into it. One of the boys made an island, and a pond in the middle. He piled up the sand, and made a mountain at the side, and a river running down the mountain into the pond.’ During his explanation, the child repeated the operations referred to.

(ii) *A Dramatic Lesson in History*.—Standard II.

This is frequently a disappointing method, unless ambition is tempered with discretion. Only the very simplest episodes can be acted, unless the teacher carefully prepares the details of the selected subject, or has recourse to a dramatic reader in which the children may read the dialogue. The intention of a lesson of this kind, is merely to obtain free speech between the various persons of the episode, in the form of a liberal paraphrase of what has previously been taught or read. As a method of teaching history, the small extent of the ground that can possibly be covered, makes its value debatable. For the episodes which may be treated in dramatic lessons are necessarily brief, and of the sort that will appeal to children just as strikingly in the guise of stories.

A lesson we have recently seen attempted was the acting of a number of Roman children, who were talking in the streets of Rome about a procession

of captured Britons. The lesson was carefully prepared with an eye to the habits of the Britons, and the methods of their conquerors. The oral composition of the actors was eagerly followed, and, as shown by the answers received to questions, readily remembered by the class. From the specimens of dialogue, it will be seen that it was poor stuff to remember.

‘There is going to be a procession to-day’—‘We are going to see our generals bring the British chiefs in chains’—‘They are taking them to the Temple of Jupiter’—‘Who are these Britons?’—‘They are the captured people of Britain’—‘Our generals are bringing back all the treasures of Britain and some slaves’—‘I have heard the Britons don’t believe in our gods. What do they worship?’—‘They worship the oak-tree, and they think the mistletoe is a holy plant’—‘Their priests are called Druids’—‘They wear a white robe with a golden knife to cut the sprays of mistletoe’—‘They sometimes kill men and children, and burn them for a sacrifice to their gods’—‘We must teach them better’—‘Look at that tall man, who is he?’—‘That is the Prince of the East part of Britain. His name is Carac-tacus’—‘They are going to the Temple’—‘We will follow.’

It is fairly evident, that when children have reached the point where they can invent original dialogue freely, the study of history should have progressed beyond the consideration of episodes. Until then, the labour and the preparation involved are out of proportion to the benefit resulting therefrom. We give this example merely as a suggestion

for experimental treatment. On another day the children acted with much better results a familiar and simple selection from the 'Coral Island.'

(iii) *A Subject from the Nature Study.* Standard II.

A typical example is a discussion upon the germination of various seeds, *e.g.* peas, beans, and wheat-grains, which have been planted in damp sawdust, or placed outside a roll of wet blotting-paper in a gas-jar. The children are given opportunity to examine the visible seeds; and when the oral composition lesson takes place, they uncover the buried seeds, and describe to the others exactly what they see. Words like 'germinate,' etc., are not encouraged. The children use words like 'sprout' instead; and describe the various parts of the seed, the germ, the root, the seed-leaves, the root-hairs, or whatever has made its appearance, or strikes their attention, in their own simple, unscientific terms. This is essentially a 'telling' exercise. In the subsequent nature-study lesson, the teacher arranges questions with a definite view to establish what changes have taken place in the seeds.

(iv) *Oral Composition on a Story.* Standard III.

Step I. The teacher carefully tells the story, making it as vivid as possible, or the children read it aloud and afterwards silently.

Step II. The children discuss the story with the teacher, and give opinions upon the details and the persons included in the narrative.

Step III. Oral composition is not attempted until a day or two has elapsed, or the exercise will be merely one in verbal memory. Various children tell the story. If it is a long one, each relates only a portion, and others continue it at convenient points. During this part of the lesson the teacher makes rough notes of any omissions essential to the narrative, awkward constructions, and verbal errors, in order that they may be dealt with later.

Step IV. A portion of the story is selected by the teacher, constructed orally sentence by sentence, and written on the blackboard. The children suggest improvements. Incomplete sentences are criticised and corrected; and the children learn that a complete statement is required to make a sentence. (The oral exercises are followed by children writing set portions of the narrative as continuous compositions, the best of which may be read aloud in their right sequence, so that the substance of the whole is reproduced.)

In an oral composition upon the story of 'Robin Hood and Friar Tuck' from 'Stories of Robin Hood and his Merry Outlaws' (Harrap), the following points were noted:

(a) Most of the matter, being the product of several children, was disconnected and scrappy.

(b) The same form of sentence was frequently employed for several successive sentences.

(c) Essential points of the story were not always grasped, a fact which the children afterwards recognised as causing a want of clearness in some parts

of the composition. For instance, the point that Friar Tuck and Robin finally emerged on opposite banks of the stream was slurred over; and it was consequently not clear how the yeoman's men had to shoot at the priest's dogs across the water.

(d) Unsuitable words were used, and these formed the basis of a valuable discussion later on. For example, 'firing' was used instead of 'shooting' to describe the loosing of the shafts.

(e) Most children unconsciously changed the utterances given originally in '*oratio recta*' to '*oratio obliqua*' with an entire absence of effort, which would not have been the case in a written exercise. The single example in which direct speech was employed was that of a child who had a particularly good verbal memory. This was not an advantage in the oral composition, for in this instance the child merely reproduced the words of the original.

(f) A few instances of what would not be considered good English were given, as 'he was *a bit too heavy* for Robin Hood,' and 'he got ashore *all right*.' Some indefinite statements, as 'The dogs cleverly dodged the arrows and *brought them back*' required discussion to make them clear.

(v) *Oral Composition on a Narrative Poem.*
Standard III.

The following points in a lesson on the substance of 'The Wives of Brixham' may be of interest.

Step I. The poem was carefully read by the children a day previous to the oral exercise.

, *Step II.* Various children built up the following (the numbers indicate where a fresh child continued the exercise) :

(1) 'The boats of Brixham used to go out and meet the seas [to search for fish]. They were a fishing-fleet. One day, when they were out, a great storm arose. [It grew quite dark. They could not see the stars, and could not find their way back.]'

(2) 'The men on shore started to tremble [because they knew that the fishing-fleet was in danger]. The wives said that they had beds at home, and would light a bon-fire. So they lit a bon-fire with all the beds they could get; and they took the baby's pillow, who could not say no. [The pillow of the baby who could not say no.] [As it was dark, the bon-fire was wanted on the pier to guide the men home.]'

(3) 'They heaped a bon-fire on the pier. But they didn't know whether it was a bon-fire or a funeral pile. Soon the cry arose that a boat was coming back.'

(4) 'As the boat came nearer to the pier, the people started shouting out, "Is this your father?" or "Here comes your husband!"'

(5) 'Then the other boats came back, and many of the women hadn't got their husbands. They'd been wrecked. With the coldness of the sorrow they didn't know the night was cold. [They did not think about not having any beds.]'

(6) 'So when the boats of Brixham go out to struggle with the wind and waves, you see the love of women travelling like light upon the sails.'

Note.—The sentences in parentheses were added in the next step.

Step III. A subsequent lesson. In the second step, the sentences were written upon the black-

board, and discussed. It was now found that 'meet the seas' did not altogether explain the mission of the boats, and the first addition was made. The essential fact of the boats being overtaken by the darkness of rain and night was omitted, and rectified at this stage, as indicated. The purpose of the bonfire on the pier was also made clear; and the fact that the beds which had been destroyed were not missed on that night of sorrow was added. A final reading of the blackboard version resulted in 'did not' and 'they had' being substituted by the class for their colloquial forms.

CHAPTER X.

IMAGINATIVE COMPOSITION FOR JUNIORS.¹

THE original fairy-tale which forms the subject of this chapter, was constructed orally by a class of rural children (Standards III. and IV.), and, though necessarily crude and disconnected, is instructive as an example of what children can achieve even with a limited experience of oral composition. It serves further to show that fancifulness is innate with children; and how real progress in composition may accompany a course of recreative lessons.

The story was shaped sentence by sentence in the course of several half-hour lessons on Friday afternoons, under the oral editing of the teacher, who wrote down the suggestions which the class decided were the best. The children were most eager to have their individual contributions embodied in the completed story. Thus, the exercise, besides stimulating imagination, was an exercise in taste and

¹ The experiment in oral composition, discussed here, was conducted by the writer some years since. It was the subject of an article in the issue of 'Temple Bar,' dated April 1906.

judgment. Almost all the members of the class managed to contribute something ; and one suggestion for an addition was usually followed by a suggested improvement. In this way the oral exercise became of vital interest to all, and gave a great impetus to the general composition exercises performed by the class.

In the preliminary talk to decide upon the form the story should take, it was hypothesised that the impossible might happen at any moment—the unexpected did so constantly—people were to be able to fly, dive, burrow, or to become invisible ; it was understood that new creatures could appear if needful ; and, in short, that there was to be no limitation of matter or of action.

At the commencement there was some amount of irrelevant material contributed. It had been the intention to develop the plot in the course of the composition, but this method was departed from as soon as some idea of form and scope became perceptible, and the general outline of the story was then definitely settled. The class had some previous acquaintance with ‘Grimm’s Tales,’ to which the fairy-tale bears witness in some few places.

After discussion it was decided that the *dramatis personæ* should include a boy, a girl, and some supplementary characters. The good influence was ‘Fairy Dewdrop,’ and the children voted solidly for a witch. When, after some argument, the names were decided, it was settled that the boy should be called ‘Peterkin,’ the girl ‘Olive,’ and the

wise woman 'Witch Catkin.' The suggestion for the fairy's name was received unanimously.

The opening was very joyous and inconsequential, and refreshingly juvenile :

'Peterkin was a very naughty boy. He was rude to those older than himself, and Peterkin lived very happily in his hut by the lake. For Peterkin was an orphan [clearly a desirable state !], and lived by wood-cutting. The boy used to listen to the birds chattering in the trees at sunset ; and he was soon able to understand them.

'One day, as he was listening to the birds, he heard them say that Fairy Dewdrop was coming to live in the forest. It was a good thing for Peterkin, but he did not know it then. A week after this, he heard a great noise coming through the forest. He tried to run away, and the noise became louder. Looking back, he saw a large number of wild horses coming towards him ; and he saw on a little white pony a woman dressed in black. And by her ran two dragons, spitting fire and making the dreadful noises he had heard. The woman's face was ugly and brown, with a long hooked nose and pointed chin, because she was Witch Catkin. As she came towards him he tried to run away, but the dragons were too fast for him. He dodged behind a tree, and as he did so, his foot caught in something soft. Looking down he saw a curious leather jerkin, and, scarcely knowing what he did, he slipped it on. Immediately a great change took place in him. He felt that he was shrinking fast. The flies round him became as large as horses : the dragons, who stood looking for him, looked like two burning mountains. He knew that he could not be larger than a pin's head.'

It was at this point that a pause was made to adjust the general outline of the plot, and to decide

what was to be included in the tale. In the preceding portion it is instructive to note what the children liked. They revelled in contrasts—the dark witch-woman rode a white horse; the fiery dragons roared in the quiet wood. Another thing which obviously delighted the children was swiftness of incident: and it was remarkable with what readiness they accommodated their mental vision to the change in relative sizes which had taken place. The latter is shown strikingly in the resumption of the narrative:

‘He felt very frightened, and found it hard work to push his way through the grass stems, which seemed to him as large as palm-trees. When he reached the bark of the tree, Peterkin found a little crack opening into the bark. He climbed inside this tiny opening, and then, to his surprise, he found that a very very small staircase led inwards towards the heart of the tree. As he went on, everything became dark, and he had to feel his way with his hands. He thought that he would very soon be at the heart of the tree. He walked on and on for about six hours. He could not get along if he did not feel. He thought he was never going to leave off walking. When he got further into the middle of the tree, he heard little tiny noises which sounded to him like the faint twitter of a butterfly as he settles on a flower. He could just make out what they said. There was a lighted room before him, and he hid behind a curtain. He looked into the little room; and it was lit up with pretty lights which looked smaller than the smallest stars.’

There was an interesting discussion as to what the speech of the microscopic little men resembled. “Like a mouse squeaking,” suggested one child:

"Like the scratching of your pen on the paper when you write," said another: but when the piece of imagery, "Like the faint twitter of a butterfly as he settles on a flower," was proposed, it was received rapturously by the class. Not only had the child thought down to the noise of tiny elves; but he had evolved an idea which, imaginary though it was, yet gave the impression of actual sound. The child had constructed for himself the paradox of an inaudible noise, and, without their quite knowing why, it delighted the class enormously.

The unevenness of the succeeding portion of the story is due to the fact of its being the combined product of several scholars; and it shows also that dialogue presents difficulties to children:

'Around a little golden table in the middle of the room sat five little men about the size of Peterkin; and they were chattering together, and enjoying themselves merrily. And one said to a little man in his shirt-sleeves, "Where did you leave your jacket, Tom?" . . . "I don't quite know, but I think I left it outside in the big world." When Peterkin heard this he was so frightened that he ran under the table. But the little men were too quick for him [this latter is an essentially boyish phrase, and kept constantly recurring], and they caught him and said: "What are you doing here? Where did you get that coat?" The dwarf said: "That is my coat. We shall lock you up, and beat you with a big stick!" They started to do so at once.

'At this Peterkin was very much frightened. They did not want him to go away, and they bound him with ropes as fine as spider's webs, so that he could not get away. Then they put him into a tiny prison cell and

unbound him. When the door was shut, Peterkin looked round, and saw, sitting in a corner of the cell, a beautiful little girl. She said her name was Olive. Great tears, as large as the pollen of a flower, rolled down her rosy cheeks. Then Peterkin said : " I want to get out ! " The little girl said : " You can't get out. Where did you come from ? " .

' Presently, as they were chattering, they heard little footsteps coming, and they wondered what it could be. The door suddenly opened [the class insisted upon ' suddenly ' being included], and the little man came in and said : " What were you talking about ? " And they said : " We were wishing that we could get out. But we can't get out ! " The little man chased them round the room till he caught them. As he caught them he dropped his stick, which Olive snatched up, and hit him over the head with it. Peterkin said : " We must look about and get out now ! " In reply Olive said : " Look at that little creak (crack) in the wall : if we take the stick we can break the creak open." And this they did. And to their astonishment, they found like a little canal of sap going upwards.

' They climbed into this, and thought that if they were not very careful they would be drowned. So they built a little canoe from the wood at the sides of the canal ; and it floated upwards slowly until at last they reached a leaf on the top of the tree. When they got to the end of the canal, they began to climb through a hole, but it was no easy task. Then they found that they were hanging on a leaf. And Olive sobbed out : " I'm so glad we got away from they horrid little men." Their clothes stuck to the leaf because they were very sticky. When they had time to look about them, they saw in the forest a great battle raging, and, looking attentively, they saw it was between Witch Catkin and Fairy Dew-drop. Then they saw some nimble elves climb on one

of the dragon's backs, and drive a hard blow with a hatchet right through his armour into his blood. Now, a dragon's blood is made of fire; and, directly the dragon was wounded, he blew up. The explosion blew up the other dragon and Witch Catkin. The Witch never came back again. The elves who were blown up with the dragons flew down again. So Olive, and Peterkin, and Fairy Dewdrop were left.'

Of course the whole thing is inconsequential. The absence of logical form, and the great love of the unexpected are among the most prominent features of the exercise. The discussion of the class upon 'dragon's blood' was amusing and instructive. Several things, such as hot-water, steam, etc., were suggested as forming its substance; but the idea of 'liquid fire' stirred some latent sense of fitness, and was eventually adopted. The end of the story is interesting. The 'ant' business was tremendously enjoyed; and the ultimate conclusion of the story probably originated from the suggestion furnished by the name of the fairy.

'Olive and Peterkin were shaken from the tree and fell to the ground, but a spider's web caught them safely. The spider was not at home. He was gone to make another web. Close by them they saw Fairy Dewdrop peacefully sleeping in a wood-anemone. They caught two ants and rode up to her; and as they got near the flower the ants hitched up their backs and shot them off. They fell right on Fairy Dewdrop's crown. This woke her up. She asked them what they were doing, and at first she was very angry. They told her their story [what Olive's was is not indicated; probably she had made her way into the tree in a manner similar

to Peterkin. The children took her presence in the tree for granted, at any rate, and attempted no explanation, and asked her to make them the proper size again. She said she would if Peterkin would promise to be a good boy and protect Olive. At this she raised her wand, and put it over them three times. And they soon became their proper size.

‘When they were their proper size, the fairy said, “The first six dewdrops you pick every morning shall become diamonds.” Then the fairy mounted on a dewdrop, and floated away.’

This exercise in imaginative composition is given *in extenso*, because it is an actual example of what our country children can do when their interest is fully aroused. It was noted that some of the children who contributed material to the tale had never before shown any enthusiasm for composition exercises. One point especially was worthy of notice—the children would not be bothered with a moral. Their interest in the exercise was chiefly constructive; they found invention pleasurable. In spite of its crudeness, its absurdities, and perhaps, on account of its impossibility, they enjoyed building up the story. But, when a moral might have been drawn, or some conventional conclusion suggested to indicate the ultimate fate of Peterkin and Olive, the children would have none of it. “That’s all. That’s the end!” was what they said; and no doubt they were right. Children desire no moral in their fairy-tales: and, if ethical teaching be included in the matter, it is better that it should be indirect and informal in its presentation.

CHAPTER XI.

DRAMATIC METHODS FOR INFANTS AND JUNIORS.

Education through Play.¹

The intention of play-lessons, of course, is that children should not always be consciously at work, and that they should enjoy their schooling, by participating in various forms of physical as well as mental activity, and, further, that their instinct for doing and constructing should be fully utilised. It is well to remember, however, that dramatic lessons are only a small portion of education through the medium of plays and games.

That there is more attention being paid to the psychology of the individual scholar than formerly, is shown in the great interest aroused by the publication of Madame Montessori's method—a definite and scholarly attempt to promote a system of unhampered education of the senses, which, by means of free instruction and the use of scientifically selected material, shall lead to the education of the

¹ G. E. Johnson's work on this subject, 'Education by Plays and Games' (Ginn & Co.), is admirable.

intellect. Incidentally, the scheme aims at a liberal grasp of the principles of reading, writing, and numeration, as well as the development of the emotions and sentiments, combined with a love of animate and inanimate nature. The intentional postponement of collective lessons in the system, however, has the effect of eliminating various plays and games in which the children may join simultaneously. Some teachers are of opinion that the educational gain resulting from the more or less solitary occupation of the child is counterbalanced by the loss due to the omission of collective teaching. Possibly the Dottoressa goes too far in her insistence upon self-instruction ; and a wise use of our class-methods, with their happy appeal to the social instincts of childhood, is needed to preserve the balance of effectiveness in elementary schools. Be that as it may, collective plays and games certainly exert a most valuable effect upon children ; and the present constitution of our classes renders much of the practice in individual methods wasteful, because of the difficulty, whilst the teacher is employed with individuals, of finding suitable occupation for all the children not being directly instructed.

It seems that in education, as in other branches of thought, every generation has to rediscover for itself the same truths. In writing of recreative lessons, Sir Joshua Fitch said : " They [children] like best something to handle, to arrange, to derange, and to re-arrange ; a doll which can be dressed and undressed, a house of bricks which can be built up

and pulled down ; a tool which can actually be used ; a machine model or a puzzle which can be taken to pieces." All lessons to young children, whether individual or collective, are the better for appealing to the instinct for construction or doing.

It is well to remember that the dramatic method, which is, or should be, a form of active employment for most of the class, is a device rather than a general method ; and, as such, for occasional use only. Most frequently it will be employed for the youngest children, and less and less often as the more restless stages of childhood are passed, when formal instruction becomes as proper as it is practicable. Acting of rhymes and stories, and games of imitating and pretending, are far more easy than the dramatic representation of formal subjects of study such as history and nature-study ; and the teacher of the junior classes requires to exercise much discretion in applying the dramatic method at a time when the atmosphere of the infants' department has been exchanged for that of the junior school. It is advisable to consider carefully what is practicable as well as what is desirable—what may be effectively attempted without occupying more time than the training achieved compensates for.

Suitable Dramatic Games for Infants.

We have already discussed incidentally some forms of dramatic play which may advantageously be used with very young children. It will, however, be well to discuss them again with reference to the

choice of dramatic exercises which have been found suitable. The special utility of the dramatic method with infants is that the children learn to express themselves unconsciously—the interest of the lesson leads them to forget the shyness they otherwise might feel. Besides, children have an innate love for all forms of mimicry and acting. In the words of the ‘Suggestions’: “Every observer of children is aware of the keenness of their dramatic instinct and their love of acting, which may properly be encouraged in Elementary Schools. This is, of course, only an instance of the judicious use of play in the development of speech; many others will suggest themselves to the resourceful teacher, *e.g.* guessing games, in which children are called upon to describe things without actually naming them, and to identify things as described by other children. The chief purpose of the exercise, which should be practised steadily through the six or seven years spent in the Infants’ and Junior School, is the enlargement of vocabulary and the attainment of fluency in the use of speech.”

One reason why the dramatic method is found so effective in the cultivation of speech is that the children, instead of addressing the teacher, speak to the other children: this makes the exercise more interesting to them all, and, besides being less formal, assists the natural motive for speech—the desire to make themselves understood.

The following are simple plays and games, which are practicable with the youngest children:

(a) *Acting Nursery Rhymes and Jingles.* We have already discussed this form of dramatic exercise in the chapter on Conversation Lessons for Infants, with 'Jack and Jill' as the example. Rhymes like 'Little Miss Muffet' and 'Ding dong Bell' readily suggest suitable games for the class; in the former, one child will act whilst the rest repeat the words; in the latter, the whole can participate in the actions. Where the words are supplied by a well-known rhyme the exercise is easy.

(b) *Imitative Plays.* Children are born with the imitative instinct, and practise mimicry whenever they can find opportunity. The undirected activities of the happy child playing alone suggest the form of imitative plays. A child will place a doll on a stair, and pretend to read a book to it. 'Reading to baby' is, therefore, a good example of an imitative game. Others are, pretending to cook, to keep house, playing railway stations, serving tea, and pretending to be children of other lands (Japanese, Eskimos, etc.) as preliminary geographical games.

(c) *Make-believe Games.* In this group are included such exercises as, playing school, 'fathers and mothers,' giving a party, fire-engine going to a fire, etc.

(d) *Guessing Games,* of the type referred to in the 'Suggestions.'

(e) *The Acting of Familiar Fairy-tales.* We have already dealt with 'Tom Thumb' in connection with this dramatic occupation. Children readily enact such favourites as 'The Babes in the Wood'

and 'The Sleeping Beauty.' For infants the treatment should never be ambitious. They like better doing than explaining what they do, and they can be given free opportunity for the former. The story need not be in the form of connected dialogue, indeed it may be performed almost entirely in dumb show, so that the children will represent in actions the ideas which later they will learn to express in words.

(f) *Poetry Games.* We have considered the dramatic treatment of the poem 'Bed-Time' already. Other forms are such children's games as ring-games of the type of 'Poor Mary is a-weeping' and 'Oranges and Lemons.' It is possible in nearly all recitation lessons for the class to perform simple actions together, whilst individual children recite. This method, as has been indicated, leads the class to follow the sense of the verses carefully in their endeavour to accompany the words with fitting actions. With this method, the love of movement and of rhythm will have ample scope.

Dramatic Exercises for Juniors.

These should always be simple in character: ambitious exercises frequently prove failures. Original dialogue is most difficult for children, indeed it is more or less impracticable, except when the subject-matter of the play is so familiar as constantly to suggest the dialogue. Some suitable forms of dramatic exercises are included in the following :

(a) *Games.* Dumb Crambo and Charades. In the former, the children act a word in dumb-show; and individual children, after describing the actions they have seen, guess the word which has been illustrated. In charades, the first syllable or part of the selected word is acted with suitable dialogue, then the second part, and finally the whole. Children who have not been acting guess the word, and describe the actions of the performers. This is a good exercise in oral composition. A typical word is 'Washington.' To illustrate the first half, a group of children go through the actions and dialogue of a washing-day. Then another group acts a scene to illustrate the word 'ton'; and a third group acts the story of the 'cherry tree.' In this exercise the usual procedure of Christmas parties is departed from. Instead of the actors going out to settle how they are going to illustrate the word (which has been supplied to them by the teacher), just one or two children go out. These latter form the audience and guess the word, telling the class what portions of the game led to the discovery.

Another suitable game of this description is the acting of the title of a familiar book or story, *e.g.* 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'Jack the Giant-killer,' etc., after which the class guess it. A variant of the game is when a child impersonates a character of whom he has read or heard, relates the history of the personage without giving his name, and finishes with the question, "Who am I?"

Historical Tableaus: Selected children group

themselves in various attitudes to represent some event in history, such as the Landing of the Romans in Britain, Alfred and the Cakes, King Charles, in the Oak, etc. The class choose the best group by a show of hands.

The foregoing are good games for the recreation interval in bad weather, when it is inadvisable for the children to go into the playground ; or they may be played out of doors when the conditions are suitable.

(b) *Dramatic History.* Children act a play which they have previously read and studied in their dramatic history readers, and, very occasionally, an episode in history for which they supply their own dialogue. An objection to many of the dramatic history readers is that the scenes are periods instead of episodes, and do not lend themselves to spirited acting. Also the dialogue is frequently too difficult for children to grasp readily, being based more or less accurately on the language of the period and the people studied.

(c) *Playing at Geography.* One or two children describe the manners, customs, and modes of life of children in other lands of whom they have read. After this, groups of children act the various occupations of the people of the countries described.

(d) *Dramatic Exercises based on Literary Reading.*

- (i) Acting stories told by the teacher. Kipling's 'Just-so' Stories are admirable for the purpose.

- (ii) Dramatic Literary Reading. Children read the dialogue in turn, selected ones taking the various parts. The dialogue of readers written for this purpose is sometimes indifferently worded and unconvincing.
- (iii) Acting stories that have been read in the class. Amongst other suitable books, some of Harrap's publications are excellent. We recommend 'Robin Hood and his Merry Outlaws.'
- (iv) Narrative Poetry of the type of 'John Gilpin' and 'Hiawatha' is very suited to this purpose.

(e) *Nature Study*. Stories of the type of 'With Nature's Children,' by Lilian Gask, are excellent for dramatic treatment. They offer a change from the purely literary stories, as the children may pretend to be the various wild creatures.

General Remarks.

Use may be made of the paper-cutting, cardboard-modelling, and light woodwork lessons for the preparation of the various 'properties' utilised in the occasional dramatic lessons. Paper helmets, lath swords, crowns, and many other articles will be required.

The teacher will select only those forms of dramatic exercises which experience has shown he can use with advantage. He will choose those with which he is personally in sympathy, and with which

he believes he can achieve the end he has in view—that the children should express themselves naturally and joyously. Some teachers obtain really admirable results by means of methods which others find impracticable. The great requisites for success in dramatic lessons are sympathy, enthusiasm, and faith in the ability of the children to carry out what they are set to attempt.

CHAPTER XII.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION FOR THE JUNIORS.

Preparatory Work.

Exactly what may be attempted in the way of written composition must depend to a great extent upon the progress in oral composition and writing which has been made previous to the promotion of the infants to the junior classes. Schemes of work in the most successful infants' schools differ widely. In some, exercises in writing and speaking are subordinated to the cultivation of general intelligence; in poor districts the infant school aims chiefly at interesting the child in school through the medium of plays and games, and much progress in formal instruction is impracticable. Whatever is the state of progress in which the children are admitted to the junior classes, the teacher will have to accommodate his work to the past educational history of his class.

Written composition, as a definite exercise, will not begin, either with infants (where it is seldom of much practical use) or in the junior section, until the children have attained considerable proficiency

in oral composition, and have mastered the mechanical art of writing. To hasten the introduction of written composition before this proficiency has been attained, is to court failure and to delay progress, with the additional risk of disgusting children with the exercise. Slow progress and careful graduation are most necessary in the earlier stages. The rate of progress of a class in written composition should be that of the average child. The child above the average will always turn out work in advance of the rest of the class, but he will not be seriously handicapped by finding the exercises easy. The teacher may find it necessary to set separate and simpler exercises for the more backward children in order that they shall be given work which may result in proper progress being made.

The exercises in word-formation with printed and script characters, leading to actual writing, transcription, spelling, and writing words and sentences from memory, in the infants' school have been the prelude to the attempts at written composition which follow in the junior school. This written composition will be performed concurrently with exercises in oral composition. The mental processes which occur are alike for both, though in written exercises the child is deprived of the assistance which he obtains in spoken language from appropriate emphasis and inflection, and from the unconscious gesticulation in which he habitually indulges. The effect of the loss of these oral assistants to expression is that the earlier written exercises will inevitably

suffer in clearness, particularly when to their withdrawal is superadded the mechanical labour and slowness involved in writing. The child also finds it difficult to remember what he has set down, though this is not the distinct handicap it might otherwise prove if from the first he is encouraged to read back before adding to the written matter, and to choose his words slowly and carefully. It will be found, however, that the earliest attempts at written composition present enormous difficulties to the children of the lowest class.

Exercises in Written Composition.

The exercises may be selected from the same subjects as the oral work, with which they are taken concurrently. Indeed, in the lowest standard the work will still chiefly be oral. In estimating progress in the earlier compositions, attention should be mainly directed to the matter. If the children succeed in expressing their ideas—always supposing they have ideas to express—the teacher is well advised not to trouble much about form.

(a) *Preliminary Exercises.* Printing, copy-writing, dictation, and writing from memory. These exercises of the infants' department will be still practised with the first standard. Simple written composition, which has been orally prepared, is the chief addition.

(b) *The Reproduction of Short Narratives.* If the child is not required to condense a long story, but is allowed to reproduce it at something like its original length, this is probably the simplest exercise

he can be given. There is little demand upon the intelligence. Of course the child has to understand the story. But the practice of writing it in his own words is an excellent exercise in breaking up the whole into sentences. To avoid the mechanical reproduction of easy stories, as soon as the children can write coherently in sentences, simple reproduction should be replaced by exercises in which the point of view is changed, *e.g.* the story may be rewritten in the first instead of the third person, though this is seldom practicable below Standard II. In the earlier stage, useful exercises on narrative (prose or poetical) may be arranged by writing half a dozen sentences upon the blackboard for the children to answer in sentences. If the teacher's questions are logically connected, the result will be a connected whole which covers the ground of the story. Further, the usual spelling difficulty will be obviated to some extent, as the child generally will employ the words used for the questions in his answers.

(c) *Description.* From the first the children may be given brief exercises in describing familiar things. If their attempts are discussed orally, they will soon lose the tendency to dwell upon unnecessary detail. Preliminary oral questions will also lessen this tendency, but if carried to excess, the practice of putting questions will limit the child's composition and lead to thoughtless reproduction of the points elicited. The chief difficulty will be in connecting properly the detached sentences; though as this is

a fault of form, it may be left for time to remove this difficulty. The child will learn unconsciously how to connect ideas from the plentiful reading of good models.

(d) *Letter-writing.* Real subjects should be set for the children to write upon. They need to know the common conventions of letter-writing; but their attempts, especially at first, should be very leniently criticised. Letters may be written to the teacher, and to the children in the class. Simple subjects are to be found in the outdoor and indoor interests of the children.

(e) *Free Composition.* These exercises are stimulating and interesting to the children. Though they need not be completed in a single lesson, or even in two, it is well to limit the scope of the composition by oral discussion. Otherwise the majority of the class will commonly commence in a rambling way which does not permit of the exercises being finished. Suitable subjects will be found in descriptions of the dramatic lessons, the games played, and childish experiences. Various concrete subjects may be written about; and short accounts of some point in geography, nature-study, etc., may be given, as well as easy questions on the matter of the readers. Subjects like those indicated assist to keep the written composition in living contact with the other parts of the curriculum. Exercises should be carefully graduated in difficulty, and the subjects should be only those in which the children are naturally interested.

(f) *Expansion of Blackboard Summaries.* This is a valuable exercise that is often neglected. When careful summaries of narratives or of formal lessons are made, children easily learn to expand them into complete sentences bearing a logical relation to one another. The blackboard summaries not only suggest vocabulary and spelling, but assist as a guide to the proper sequence of the composition.

(g) *Exercises of a Reflective Nature.* At this stage no attempt at such exercises will be made. Imaginative exercises may be given, but not those requiring judgment. Children of this age, even if of a reflective bent, lack the power to express their thoughts articulately; and their inability to recognise and describe mental experiences makes such attempts practically worthless.

Notes on Practical Difficulties.

Correcting Exercises. Perhaps the most insistent difficulty the teacher encounters is the correction of exercises. Generally speaking, the laborious correction of written exercises, either out of school hours, or when the children are occupied in silent work, is a waste of time and energy. It results certainly in a set of neatly-marked books, but unless the children are made to read, note, and rewrite corrections the result is negative. Unless a good proportion of the compositions are corrected orally with the class, or with the individual children, the actual correction will be very ineffective. As a rule, no more composition

should be given than can be marked : other written exercises, such as transcription for the lowest standard, or the rewriting of an exercise, or dictation, being set until all the compositions have been corrected. Some teachers do not attempt to correct every exercise, but concentrate their attention upon a portion of the exercises of the class, in such a manner that, at least once a week every child has some work fully corrected with him individually. The practice has much to recommend it, but it requires care and system. It is specially necessary to arrange that no child is able to forecast which of its exercises will be fully examined, and which merely looked at. In all cases, of course, the teacher makes a rapid survey of the work of the class at the close of the lesson to prevent careless work being given in.

Points of Form and Expression. Certain mistakes will be constantly recurring. They can only be eliminated by careful teaching in the oral lessons, though in the latter the teacher will consistently avoid set definitions. Broadly, it is necessary for the children fully to understand the following :

(a) The form of a simple sentence. The children will learn that a sentence consists of a complete idea ; and that every sentence contains a 'naming part' and a 'telling part.' The former is that which is spoken about, and the latter that which is said about it. Examples may be selected from the readers, and discussed with the aid of the blackboard. Children will see that sentences are closed with a period, and that each commences with a capital

letter. Frequent recapitulation and discussion of examples are necessary.

(b) The joining up of simple sentences into sentences containing more than one idea—compound and complex sentences. Though children are constantly making oral use of these sentences, they find difficulty in writing them correctly. The best method of teaching their use is to select a suitable paragraph from the reader ; tell the class to construct it entirely in the form of simple sentences ; write the result on the blackboard ; and ask the children without using books to reconstruct the sentences in such a way as to combine them by the use of joining words. They will readily see that compound sentences may be formed by the use of a conjunction and the omission of the repeated subject. The second subject will be struck out, and a comma placed at the end of the first of the two sentences forming the compound sentence. The use of the comma in forming complex sentences may be shown in the same way, though the children will always be liable to error in the earlier stages. The frequent consideration of examples will lead them to grasp the use of the comma in sentence division, and the manner of forming complex sentences, though set terms to describe them need not be learned. c

(c) In the lower standards correct paragraph formation will be only partially understood. The way to deal with this difficulty is to take a page or so of a good reading-book, and to discuss the reason for the introduction of a new paragraph. The children

learn that a line is indented, *i.e.* a new paragraph commences, when the matter has a different relation to the subject spoken of from that in the preceding sentences. If a composition is constructed orally in conformity with certain headings, and written upon the blackboard, even very young children may be led to see that new paragraphs generally correspond to the new headings.

(*d*) To teach the agreement of a verb with its subject, the readers will again be used. Only simple points can be dealt with at this stage, such as when to use 'was' and 'were,' etc. It is also well to take faulty sentences, *e.g.* those containing a single subject used with a plural verb, and *vice-versa*. The children in most cases will have little difficulty in correcting these by ear. They might then be written on the blackboard, and the required corrections made in coloured chalk, before being read aloud in their corrected form. The corrections should as far as possible be made by the children who were guilty of the original mistakes. Simple verbs may be partially conjugated upon the board to teach proper agreement in person and number.

(*e*) The use of pronouns to avoid repetition of the subject, and the substitution of a new word for one of similar meaning which has been used already. This difficulty in expression—like all those at this stage—should be treated orally, partly with reference to the readers, and partly by discussion of the sentences written by the children. If mistakes in this particular are to become uncommon in

practice, it is desirable to return to the point frequently.

Note.—Practical work on the foregoing difficulties shows how hard it is for children to master these points of form and expression. The only way to do so is to proceed slowly. It is better to attempt little, and to do that little intelligently and well.

It is practically impossible to deal in class with direct and indirect speech at this age, except by occasional oral reference to the construction in the readers.

Some Practical Suggestions.

Attention to the following points will obviate many of the difficulties the teacher meets in composition exercises :

(i) Endeavour to mark the work of each child individually at least once a week. The child should be at the teacher's desk for this purpose. Do not set more composition than can be corrected or at least looked over.

(ii) Employ the time of at least one lesson a week in the discussion of common errors. These may be jotted down during the individual correction to be dealt with later. These common mistakes vary with the school and the locality. Typical cases of involved sentence-construction, the formation of long compound sentences, etc., must be gone into. Avoid the practice of correcting sentences that are purposely given wrongly in printed form. The child learns the *wrong* form, because of his habit of taking

for granted that printed matter is invariably correct, and his visual memory at this age is very retentive. In oral correction with the class, always have examples read aloud in order that the ear may be the first judge of faulty constructions, etc.

(iii) When children are in doubt as to the spelling of a word, encourage them to ask the teacher or a classmate. If great difficulty is found in spelling, give frequent exercises in answering questions from the blackboard which contain words likely to present difficulties. Standard III. may begin to use a small dictionary. As the child's vocabulary is much in advance of its power to spell correctly, do not insist unnecessarily upon accurate spelling of the more uncommon words; and do not let the composition lesson degenerate into an exercise in spelling.

(iv) Give more oral than written composition exercises, especially in the two lower standards.

(v) Always prepare written exercises orally in class, and allow blackboard headings to be used (give alternate headings to encourage different treatment). *Occasionally* collect sentences, and form them into model compositions on the blackboard, upon a subject which will *not* be set as a written exercise. This practice, though instructive, has a narrowing influence, and if used too frequently is likely to destroy interest.

(vi) Sometimes give a sentence or two, and tell the class to write it in more than one form, after oral discussion of similar sentences. Ask for different ways of combining two sentences to encourage the

use of compound and complex sentences. (This is a valuable exercise in verbal gymnastics for Standard III.)

(vii) Occasionally have a composition exercise rewritten after oral discussion of selected attempts. Only the second exercise need be fully marked.

(viii) Insist on the more backward children writing *very short* compositions very carefully, and give these children most attention.

CHAPTER XIII.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION EXERCISES.

GENERALLY speaking, all attempts at independent or free composition should be orally discussed with the class before a beginning is made with the written exercises. The whole or a portion of a lesson may be devoted to this useful preliminary, especially if the teacher makes a point of getting the children to indicate how suggestions for treatment of the subject, which have been elicited, may be improved. This is a critical exercise, and its practice from the commencement will encourage thoughtfulness in written and spoken composition.

Before the class begins to write a composition, a few simple working rules should be grasped. For example, the smallest children may be taught to formulate sentences before committing them to paper, even though, in the course of writing them down, the slowness of the process causes them to make slips through forgetting what the general form of the sentence was to be. Short simple sentences should be insisted upon in the early stages, even at the expense of connectedness. This will prevent the

stringing together of a number of simple sentences to form an unwieldy compound sentence full of recurring 'ands.' From the first, children should be taught the habit of reading the last sentence written before composing the next.

The consideration of helpful rules leads us at once to enquire how far grammatical exercises may be co-ordinated with composition. Subject to the variations of each school and locality, the following may usually be attempted in Standard I.:

Written composition consisting of a succession of simple sentences in the form of a single paragraph.

Composition based upon a sequence of questions written upon the blackboard. The questions can be asked about a picture or a portion of a previous lesson; and should be arranged in such a manner that the answers form a simple paragraph composed of related sentences.

The following points in grammar certainly need oral discussion: the use of 'a' and 'an,' 'is' and 'are,' 'was' and 'were,' 'has' and 'have,' 'there' and 'their,' the names of common things, of persons and places, of days and months, of actions and feelings, the use of capital letters, and the use of the period and comma in simple sentences.

Transcription of sentences containing the grammatical points considered orally; testing the same by filling in gaps in a sentence or sentences; simple dictation exercises upon the same points; simple letters.

Standards II. and III. may write composition from

blackboard summaries, or from headings supplied by the teacher, with occasional free composition in letter-writing and narrative. To the foregoing, the combination of simple into compound and complex sentences may be added as well as exercises in the use of singular and plural subjects, 'pointing out' words, words which tell number, describing words, and past, present, and future time. In the third year, there will be oral exercises in *oratio recta* and *oratio obliqua* from the readers, preparatory to the use of the constructions in the written work of the next higher standard. Exercises on the words used after 'than' and 'as' may be given, as well as others to teach the use of words denoting 'how,' 'when,' and 'where,' and words used instead of name-words. (Of course, pronouns are naturally employed by the children from the beginning, and will consequently call for informal discussion even in the lowest class.) After the first year *occasional* exercises may be set upon unprepared subjects, even though it may still be desirable to discuss previously a composition upon an allied or a similar subject. It is often sufficient to have these free exercises written upon loose papers, and a few attempts discussed orally instead of correcting the whole of the exercises.

Outline of Composition Exercise on a Letter.— Standard II.

The subject chosen should be one that is within the scope and interest of children in this class. Example: 'How I mean to spend my summer

evenings.' Three or four lessons may be spent upon this exercise; they correspond roughly to the various numbered parts of the outline.

(i) **Preparatory Oral Lesson.**

(a) Oral consideration of the form of a letter Address, salutation, and conclusion discussed, and examples written upon the blackboard. The teacher builds up a model letter *on a different subject*, from the suggestions of the class. This is afterwards transcribed as a specimen.

(b) Oral discussion of the subject selected, and of the points of view from which it may be written. Various sections of the class are asked to write their letter to a particular person, *e.g.* the teacher, a class-mate, a big brother, mother, father, a cousin, etc.

(ii) **The Written Exercise.**

As the letter will be short, it may be completed in a single lesson, but it should include the addressing of an envelope. The letter may be written on a sheet of paper and placed in the envelope at the end of the lesson. (Envelopes will be made in the paper-cutting lesson.)

(iii) **Correction of the Exercise.**

(a) The teacher goes through the attempts without marking them in detail, and notes the errors common to the class.

(b) Oral discussion and correction of the errors. Some children to whom letters are addressed are

allowed to read their letters, and to suggest any mistakes made by the writers. The class may suggest improvements.

(c) The exercise, after being set again, is corrected in detail by the teacher. The second exercise should contain relatively few errors. Spelling mistakes may be corrected by the children writing them carefully in the margin, or below the exercise. Faulty sentences should be rewritten.

(iv) **Some Sample Letters.**

The standard of an average exercise is indicated in the examples given below, which are selected from a letter written by Standard II. boys in the first term of the year. They are samples of the first attempt at the subject of the letter.

‘Dear Pat—one evening will you come with me? I will get my bat, and you get your ball. We will have a game of cricket in the park, but we must have a tree for the wicket for we have no stumps. Jim is not playing to-morrow. He might take us for a walk right through the park until bed-time. If not we will go out and play.—Your loving friend David.’

‘Dear Will—In June I am going to have a lot of fun with my birthday presents. I am going to have a water-pistol. With it I am going to play with —— and ●——. We are going to pretend that we are serrouded, and begin to fight and squirt water about. With love, your friend Chris.’

‘Dear Bob—In the evenings I shall go out fishing in the pond. Once when I was out fishing a boy broke my jar. Some evenings I shall go for a walk in the park.

Sometimes I shall go to the picture-palace. Sometimes I shall read a book in the evenings, but I have already read one—Your loving friend Charlie.’

‘ Dear Teacher—I hope you will have a fine time in the evenings. I hope it will be very nice in the evenings because I am going to join the cricket. Are you going to join ? On Saturday Im going to play cricket with my stumps and things. Have you got any ? Shant we have a fine game if you join. Do you know where the school plays—Your loving friend Sidney.’

Outline of a Composition Exercise on a Narrative.—
Standard III.

The narrative selected as a type suitable for this lesson is the first chapter of ‘ Water-babies,’ “ Tom’s Adventures at Harthover,” from Jack’s ‘ Told to the Children ’ Series. The special appeal to children is that the story is about a child : and because it is set forth at greater length than the children are required to reproduce it, the necessity for condensation whilst retaining the essentials of the narrative renders it an intellectual exercise of some difficulty. As the children read the story themselves first, they learn to reproduce the majority of the words they employ as the result of visual memory, and spelling mistakes are therefore less common than when written composition of a story told orally, by the teacher is attempted.

(i) *Preparatory Reading Lesson.* This is a silent reading lesson. The children know that a written exercise will follow.

(ii) *Oral Discussion of the Episodes.* After the

chapter has been silently studied, the sequence of events and the various characters who make their appearance are discussed. Two or three children give brief oral summaries. These are shorter than the written compositions will be. The teacher and class discuss these skeleton attempts, and endeavour to settle the essentials of the narrative. For example, Tom's pastime of throwing stones at the legs of the groom's horse will inevitably be recalled, but this is of only minor importance. On the other hand, it may be found that the summaries will contain no reference to Tom's discovery for the first time in his life that he was dirty, though his horror at the sight of himself in the looking-glass may be remembered. Thus, by suggestion and discussion, rather than by direct instruction, the essentials of the chapter will be selected in the preliminary oral work. This is really an exercise in the perception of literary form, which will prove by no means so difficult as might be expected. Whether headings be written on the blackboard or not, is for the teacher to determine. They are not actually necessary.

(iii) *The Written Exercise.* This will occupy at least two lessons. The amount of time that will be allowed should be understood beforehand, however, so that the children may limit their output accordingly. Usually, it serves no good purpose to begin to correct an exercise whilst it is being written. The teacher may call up children for individual correction of a previous exercise, and make notes upon special errors for subsequent treatment. Opportunity should

be found at the close of each writing lesson for glancing over the books or papers to ensure that reasonable care has been taken with the writing, etc., though undue insistence upon neatness in this exercise must be at the expense of fluent composition.

(iv) *Correction.* The exercise is corrected during subsequent silent lessons, when the children are writing or studying. Exercises are brought out singly to the teacher at the desk, where they will be corrected. Later, the errors in expression and construction common to the class will be discussed orally. It may be necessary to reserve some of these for special treatment in a formal lesson. Mistakes in grammar and spelling will be corrected by each child in the lesson set apart for written corrections. Certain of the scholars may read their attempts aloud during oral correction, and the others may be encouraged to suggest their best features as well as faults. *Note.*—The individual readers should be varied from day to day.

Two examples of composition based upon this selection of narrative are given here. The first is the work of a forward child ; the second is an average composition. Either serves to indicate, by comparison with the letters quoted above, the great progress in composition produced by a year's growth and systematic work. The exercise was set in the first term of the educational year.

(a) ' A chimney-sweep, named Tom, was to come with his master, Grimes, to sweep the chimneys at Harthover. On the way, they met an Irishwoman, who was very kind

to Tom. Presently Grimes began to beat Tom, and the Irishwoman stopped him. She then went away. Tom, when he had finished sweeping the chimneys, afterwards came down the wrong chimney, and found himself in a girl's bedroom.

'Suddenly he saw beside him a little black figure, and turned on it angrily. But all at once he saw that it was himself reflected in a looking-glass. He tried to hide up the chimney, but upset the fireirons, and awoke the nurse.

'She rushed in, and thought Tom had come to steal, so she caught him. But he slipped under her arm, ran across the room, and was out of the window in a minute. He scrambled down a tree and ran across the park. The gardener threw down his scythe, the dairy-maid upset the butter-churn, the ploughman left his horses, and Sir John Harthover followed. The Irishwoman was there too, and they all ran after Tom, shouting "Stop thief!"

'After a time Tom *run* his head against a wall, but still ran on, over the wall, and along the side of it. All his pursuers ran straight on, except the Irishwoman, who had seen which way he went. She followed him. Presently he got to the top of a mountain, and stood still. He thought he heard church-bells a long way off. When he looked down the mountain, he saw a clear stream, and beside it a woman in a red petticoat. So he went down, and all the time the church-bells rang in his head. When he got down, the children in the woman's cottage were frightened at him. He asked for water, but the woman at first would not have a sweep there. Afterwards, however, she took pity on him, gave him a cup of water, and laid him in an outhouse near the stream to sleep.'

(b) 'Tom was a little chimney-sweep who worked for a master named Thomas Grimes. One day Tom's

master and Tom had to go over to Harthover Place to sweep chimney's at *St. John's* house.

'Tom went up the chimneys and swept a great many chimneys, and coming down the chimney he found that he had come down the wrong one. He found himself in a white room. In the room was a bed and in the bed was a beautiful girl. Tom looked at the girl in astonishment for he had never seen such a beautiful girl in his life, turning round he found himself looking in a looking-glass, and saw for the first time in his life that he was dirty. Turning round he made for the chimney, but his foot caught the fender and made a noise that woke up the girl and seeing Tom she screamed and a nurse rushed in the room and caught Tom.

'But Tom escaped and got on the window sill and then down a tree and nurse went to the window and called Tom a thief, and some of the hands chased but Tom escaped.

'After walking a long way up hill he came to the top of the hill and sat down for he was very tired and hungry. As he looked about he saw a cottage with a lady inside so Tom made for the cottage. When the old lady saw him she took pity on him. She gave Tom something to eat and drink, and then let him *lay* down and sleep.'

The Moral in Composition.

The notion that the child should always be encouraged to find an ethical centre in a story is still in existence, though it is generally agreed now that ethical teaching should be incidental rather than formal. Rousseau opposed the idea of the moral in his famous criticism of the fable 'The Fox and the Crow.' Some teachers still encourage children to add a moral to their stories. We venture to quote

an illuminative example of the difficulties to which the practice leads, from an old volume of the *Practical Teacher*, with the remarks upon it :

“ ‘ A good man was going along the Ganges. He saw a tiger. The tiger was going to jump. So the man did not know what to do. So he went down to prayed. So the tiger it jumped, and the man was down to pray. And the tiger missed the man. But a krokodile opened its mouth. And the tiger was eaten up and the man was saved. Moral—Look before you leap.’ The moral was not asked for, and this boy was too stupid to think of making a joke. He merely made the mistake of regarding the transaction from the tiger’s point of view.”

Further comment is unnecessary.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUBSIDIARY SUBJECTS.

VARIOUS details which form part of the general instruction in English are often spoken of as separate 'subjects.' These subsidiary subjects are separate only in so far as they are capable of being treated formally in the different class-lessons ; actually they are no more to be differentiated from the English teaching than are the various physical processes from the complete act of living, though like those processes they may be considered separately. Incidental reference has already been made to most of these 'subjects' in the course of the preceding chapters.

I.—Voice-training.

A system of English instruction is not complete unless it includes some definite attempt to promote purity and flexibility of the speaking-voice. Exercises to secure these qualities will be similar to those in use for their cultivation in the singing-voice. Purity of vowel sound is usually taught in the course of the singing-lesson, and this instruction should be supplemented by elementary exercises in phonetics,

in which the children are taught the correct position of the mouth, tongue, teeth, and lips, in both consonantal and vowel sounds. This may be done orally from the very first; indeed it is an important feature of the early training in conversation, though in the infants' school it will be secured through constant imitation of the teacher rather than by precept. Breathing exercises should also accompany training in the speaking and singing-voice. There is no better course of voice-training than that given in Bates's 'Voice Culture for Children' (Novello), though this aims more directly at the cultivation of the singing-voice. Of course the teacher will adapt any such scheme to his own requirements and the state of progress of the children.

Side by side with voice-training through singing and breathing exercises, comes voice-training through repetition of verse. In the infants' department attention will be directed to the purity of vowels and consonants rather than to dramatic effect. In the junior section attention will be paid to pure pronunciation of rhymes and the marking of rhythm: and much unconscious work (unconscious on the part of the children) may be done by attending to due emphasis, which will ensure correct sentence-accent and voice modulation. It is because errors in sound-values and expression cannot be isolated when a class repeats verse simultaneously—as well as from considerations of memorising—that we have emphasised in the preceding chapters the importance of individual recitation. Still better opportunity is

found for correcting vocal errors in those lessons in which prose and poetry are read aloud by separate scholars. Then slipshod word-endings and defective vowels may be corrected by means of the criticism of the children themselves.

II.—Hand-writing.

This is the second subsidiary subject which calls for some discussion in connection with the teaching of English. The training of handwriting is related to that of drawing, and will proceed side by side with exercises in that subject. Lines and curves which are included in ordinary script may be practised first with the sand-tray, or with chalk on the free-arm surfaces in use, later with the pencil or brush, when the movements made with the arm will be repeated on a smaller scale with the hand and wrist, and, finally, the pen will be used. The aim is to produce a bold legible hand of the simplest possible character, and the general form will be round. Special attention will be directed to proper joinings and just spacing between letters and successive words. To prevent eye-strain, so far as possible the scholar should sit squarely in front of his work at a desk of suitable height. A multiplicity of rulings to assist the size of the writing is undesirable. Three lines are perhaps useful for the early instruction of Standard I.; and double lines need only be employed for a time afterwards to foster the habit of a good bold hand, and to prevent the formation of microscopic writing later. In written composition exercises, provided legibility

is obtained, children should not be allowed to write too slowly. Indeed, in any lesson, except that of hard-writing by itself, it is undesirable to give laborious attention to neatness, for though good writing may result, the value of the composition will be proportionately discounted.

Set exercises in penmanship, however, should be given, and more frequently in the case of Standard I. than with succeeding standards. Even then, the writing lessons, so far as possible, will bear some relation to the English teaching. If copy-books are used—and these are by no means necessary, so long as a uniform system of writing is acquired—the children should fill in the lowest lines of the page first, to prevent them from copying their own efforts.

Exercises for the lower standards will include the transcription in script of printed matter (both prose and poetry), with the assistance of a chart of the alphabet in use in the school; transcription from the blackboard of sentences constructed in the oral composition lessons upon some definite points of spelling or grammatical construction; and the copying of model compositions in the form of letters, addresses, or free composition previously constructed orally. Needless to say, the exercises in mere copying will be given sparingly.

III.—Spelling and Dictation.

The time for disregarding teaching in spelling has gone by; for it has been found that the short time during which our children attend the elementary

school is insufficient to allow teachers to dispense with direct instruction. On the other hand, much valuable time has been wasted in the past in unnecessary formal instruction in spelling. The chief aid to correct spelling is the visual memory; and most children learn to spell by memorising the form of words which they constantly meet in the readers. Irregular words present difficulties, but when the eye becomes accustomed to their form they are retained unconsciously by the visual memory. If a good system of instruction in phonetic reading is employed throughout, the regular words will give little trouble. For this and other reasons the teaching in spelling will be incidental rather than formal. The advantage of using a systematic phonetic reader in addition to the more literary books has been pointed out; and this 'drill-book' should be used regularly for practice in word-naming and spelling right through the junior section. As it contains classified syllables and words it is very helpful for teaching the generalisations governing groups of words.

"Only those words need be taught which the children will have occasion to use in written composition. But this does not mean that the teaching of spelling can be wholly incidental. On the contrary, after thorough drill for two years or more in word-naming and word-building, the teacher should begin to frame lists of words commonly misspelt by the children [in their composition exercises, etc.] and of difficult new words which he wishes them to master,

classify them according to the principles of the drill-book, and practise them regularly till they are mastered. Dictation exercises, instead of being always set from prepared passages in the reader, may occasionally be manufactured so as to bring in words from these lists.”¹

Many spelling books are undesirable, because they include words which are not in the children's vocabulary ; but a few simple points of spelling, growing out of the earlier lessons in learning to read, should certainly be taught, such as : classified vowel sounds, common endings, the various rules for forming the plural of nouns, when to double the final consonant of the present tense to form the past, and simple rules for omitting the final *e* in words to which *ing* is added, etc.

Exercises in spelling will be in the form of transcription from the blackboard ; writing from dictation selected sentences containing points orally taught ; filling blanks in sentences with words which have been specially discussed ; and the dictation of suitable passages. Dictation forms a valuable training in accurate attention, when the phrases are only uttered once by the teacher.

To ensure that the lists of words collected by the teacher should be words habitually employed by the children, they will be collected mainly from the readers and the children's composition exercises. Short tests upon these are most valuable for spelling

¹ ‘Memorandum on the Teaching of English in Scottish Primary Schools.’

instruction, for children lose interest in lengthy spelling lessons. It is a good plan to set at the beginning of the week a number of words to be learned in spare moments, and to dictate these in such odd times as when registers are marked, etc. They may be looked over immediately upon the child entering school, and corrected rapidly by the children changing the papers upon which the words have been written. Short daily exercises are very useful as a means of constantly revising words which give difficulty. In dictating them the teacher should embody each word in a sentence, so that its use and meaning are indicated. This is especially necessary in the case of those words which are sounded alike but spelled differently. It is remarkable how the spelling will be improved by this systematic daily practice, without encroaching upon the time allotted to other subjects.

IV.—Grammar.

The grammar that is formally taught in the junior section is merely that required for the correct writing of English. It has no other place in the curriculum of the elementary school; and no grammar should be taught at all until written composition has begun. Little or no terminology is needed, for the use of definitions distracts attention from points of detail in the use of good English. Functional grammar-lessons, in which the work of certain words and forms of sentences is orally discussed, are not only instructive, but provide interesting exercise in elementary

logic. However, in the early stages we are considering, the correction of grammatical errors will be mainly through the ear, because the habit of correct speech is being formed by proper speaking in the class-room and by the reading of good prose.

The following are some simple exercises which may be found useful in the junior school :

Standard I. Exercises in the use of 'a' and 'an,' 'is' and 'are,' 'was' and 'were,' 'has' and 'have,' 'there' and 'their.' Examination of sentences to find the names of common things, persons and places, days and months, actions and feelings, names meaning one thing or more than one. The two parts of a sentence—naming-part and telling-part.

Standard II. Exercises on the work of Standard I., together with others upon doing-words, or verbs. Agreement of the verb with its subject in number. The sentence. Words that point out and words that tell number. Describing words. Past, present, and future time.

Standard III. The above more fully. Common and proper names; singular and plural names; present, past, and future time; simple ideas of transitive verbs without using definitions; words used after 'is' and 'was,' 'than' and 'as'; words that show 'how,' 'when,' and 'where'; words used in comparing things; words used instead of names; words used to join sentences; the sentence.

The exercises indicated above will be oral, and based chiefly upon the matter of the readers.

Some General Remarks on English-teaching to Juniors.

Many of the suggestions which have been made in the course of the preceding chapters may be most effectively carried out in short detached periods. The use of a few minutes daily for incidental work in connection with the English lessons will be found extremely valuable. It is suggested, wherever possible, that a short ten-minute period should be indicated upon the time-table at least once daily, to be devoted to "miscellaneous questions" or "educational chat." Such terms may be liberally interpreted and put to excellent use. It frequently happens that a point arises in the course of a reading or oral-lesson, which deserves particular attention, but which, if dealt with at the moment, would lead to a discursiveness which would destroy the aim of the moment. Such can be dealt with in "miscellaneous question" time. The children may also be encouraged to seek information upon points in which they are interested. "Educational chat" may be devoted to free conversation with the children upon a topic of the day, or the teacher may wish to drive home some detail of the work which needs attention, and to which he does not feel at liberty to devote a larger share of time. Occasions for short lessons of this nature will be constantly suggesting themselves. The time-table may also be rendered more elastic by including an optional lesson in the work of the week, in which a recreative English lesson may be taken—dramatic work, teacher's reading, or an

experiment in method, as the teacher may think advisable.

Broadly, by the time the child has attained the age of ten years, and reached the highest class of the junior section, he will have mastered the mechanical difficulties of reading and composition. He will be able to recognise, pronounce, and use correctly the words he has learned, and their forms should present few difficulties to him. Although he may still be unable always to grasp the exact meanings of the various words he encounters, he should be able to read a book of some difficulty silently, with pleasure and profit. Also, he will have made some beginning with the use of books as sources of information. Taste and perception will have begun to dawn, and he will find real enjoyment in the exercise of his newly-acquired powers of reading and expressing himself in spoken and written language. In addition to the free use of his senses and bodily powers, he will now begin to enter upon the joys and the emotions which the written thoughts of our poets and great writers inspire in the young. His course is clear to a critical, thoughtful, and intelligent study of the wealth of simple English literature which is the heritage of the children of this land; and which should go far to make him a happy and enlightened citizen of our vast realm.

Henceforth, the teacher's methods will undergo a corresponding change which will adapt them to the development of the child's powers and his expanding acquaintance with the mother-tongue.

APPENDIX TO PART I.

THE SUGGESTED COURSE OF STUDY IN ENGLISH,
FROM THE 'MEMORANDUM ON THE TEACH-
ING OF ENGLISH IN SCOTTISH PRIMARY
SCHOOLS.'¹

Infant Division.

Reading. Familiar words from blackboard. Sounds of regular vowels and consonants, and easy combinations of these. Short sentences and short irregular words from the blackboard. Diphthongs, double consonants and silent letters. Longer sentences from blackboard or primer. (Continuous reading of stories already told.)

Literature. Folk-songs, jingles, and rhymes; fairy-stories; descriptions of unfamiliar animals, etc., from pictures; longer (continuous) narratives, descriptions, dialogues; proverbs and maxims.

Story-rhymes, action-poems, lullabies; poems about pets, the seasons; poems about childish pranks, thoughts, and aspirations; poems of wonder; religious poems.

Talks about the stories, etc.; morals occasionally drawn. Explanation of new words chiefly by illustration.*

Teaching almost wholly oral; a beginning may be made in reading stories already told.

Continuous Oral Composition. Familiar talks and

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Repeating folk-songs, rhymes, and jingles. Retelling fairy-stories. Reproducing picture-stories. Dramatising and inventing.

Familiar talks resumed. Reproduction of gist of longer narratives, descriptions, and dialogues. Talks about these. Repeating proverbs and maxims.

Word and Sentence Study. Correction of common errors, e.g. use of 'is' and 'are,' personal pronouns and common irregular verbs. Lists of errors to be kept by teacher. Making sentences with new words.

Writing and Spelling. Printing letters. Free-drawing of elements of script. Copy-writing of small letters and combinations of these. Transcription of easy words from the blackboard. Capitals.

Printing words. Oral spelling of regular words. Irregular words from blackboard.

Voice-training. Songs. Vowel-tunes. Modulator exercises. Repetition of verse and of prose dialogue. Imitative vowel-drill and vocal gymnastics. Speech positions first of harder consonants, then of all sounds as symbols introduced. Breathing exercises.

Junior Division.

Reading. Word drill continued. Longer irregular words from blackboard and readers. Exceptions classified. Sentences from readers. Phrasing. Continuous reading of stories told orally.

Continued drill in new words preparatory to class-reading. Syllabification and word-accent. Phrasing. Sentence-accent in statements, questions, and commands. Continuous reading of easy narrative, partly silent.

Literature. Myths, legends, stories of national heroes from Scottish and British history; stories of children and primitive peoples, animal stories, stories of adventure.

Descriptions of strange lands and of simple processes.

Dialogues of child-life. Fables. Parables. Local legends and ballads, etc. Simple poems of childish humour; nature-poems; poems about animals; poems of action and patriotism; poems of the affections; simple elegiacs; poems of wonder; religious poems.

Discussion of subject-matter—incidents and characters. Children pick out favourite verses, etc. Explanation of new words and phrases chiefly by illustration and analogy, occasionally by word analysis or by turning verse into prose order.

Verse to be largely and prose partly told or read by teacher; also from class-books and continuous readers.

Continuous Oral Composition. Reproduction in main outlines of myths, etc., told or read, and of picture-lessons, oral descriptions, or from subjects of Nature Study lessons, involving some arrangement of sentences. Invention of picture-stories. Free oral narration or description of personal experiences and observations.

Continuous Written Composition. Free written composition begun on familiar themes. Letter-writing.

Word and Sentence Study. Systematic practice in sentence-making, designed to correct or anticipate common errors in accidence or idioms, and also to introduce new words learned in literature or other lessons. Lists of errors yielded by free oral or written composition to be kept by the teacher. Making statements, questions, commands. Occasional writing of sentences made orally.

Etymology. Common element in some words observed. Root and affix distinguished. Very common English affixes.

Writing and Spelling. Copy-writing continued—accuracy of form the main object. Transcription from blackboard and readers. Dictation from prepared passages and lists of words misspelt. Writing from memory. Spelling difficulties classified; distinguish